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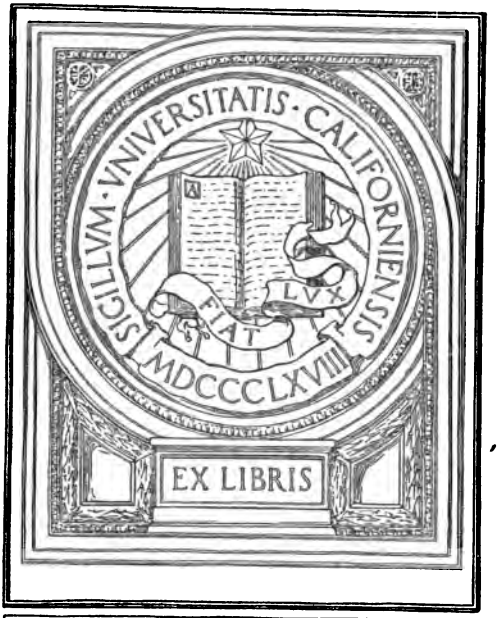
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THREE PLAYS:

WITH

A Preface,

BY

WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

THREE PLAYS:

WITH A

PREFACE,

INCLUDING

Dramatic Observations,

OF THE LATE

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL BURGOYNE,

BY

WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

CHICHESTER:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM MASON,

FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND, LONDON.

1811.

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

TO THE

RIGHT HONORABLE

THE LORD HOLLAND,

This Volume,

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

IN

GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE

OF A

VERY PLEASING LITERARY FAVOR

RECEIVED FROM

HIS LORDSHIP,

BY HIS

HIGHLY OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

WILLIAM HAYLEY.

907749

PREFACE.

AUTHORS, who have had an intercourse of many years with the public, ought perhaps, before they bid a final adieu to the press, to leave a few of such admonitory hints to their successors, as their own experience may particularly suggest. A waste of much time and application to a fruitless study, in the early part of life, may be productive of the most serious evils: To a young man of a poetical and a sanguine spirit there is hardly any pursuit so forcibly alluring as dramatic composition; yet none appears so likely to involve him in disappointment. Such at least is the remark, that I am induced to make by reflecting on the unexpected adventures, that befel the eldest of my dramatic children, Eudora.

A narrative of those adventures may possibly prove both amusing, and instructive to my reader,

and suggest to him some of the reasons, why the present group of theatrical productions have been reserved to take a chance of finding favor from an indulgent public inthe shape of a book.

The blessing of being cherished by a most amiable mother, who was fond of literature, and read Shakespear with peculiar energy and grace, inspired me in my early youth with a vehement passion for the drama. I will not expatiate on many singular proofs of this passion, that appeared as the boy ripened into man. Soon after that period I had compleated a Tragedy, from which, in all the ardor belonging to the vernal season of life, I expected the most brilliant success. The fable of the play was original, and founded only on the following fact recorded in a newspaper. A respectable father had the misfortune to see his son condemned for a capital crime, and committed to prison. In the distraction of his grief he sent him poison, that he might escape the ignominious horrors of a public execution; and found too late, that his life would have been preserved, had he not too eagerly received, and employed the rash and fatal gift of his father. Upon this awful and instructive occurrence I formed a drama of

five acts; and having a predilection for Spanish characters, I laid the scene in Spain; gave to my chief personage the dignified name of Velasco, and entitled the Tragedy "The Afflicted Father." With the presumption of inexperience I flattered myself, that I should confer a high obligation on the moral world by producing a drama, which, instead of being, as too many tragedies have been, a sort of persuasive invitation to suicide, might rather operate as an impressive lesson to prevent the frequency of that deplorable crime. A little circle of confidential friends highly applauded my production; one of them, who happened to be very intimate with Garrick, most willingly undertook to introduce it to that Prince of Actors and Managers, under such conditions, as must be most agreeable to the modesty of a young poet. These conditions were, that the Manager should give the play a fair deliberate perusal, and, if it did not please him, return the manuscript to the person, from whom he received it, writing on the cover, *stuff—nonsense*—or any contemptuous word that might intimate *unquestionable rejection:* In that case he would be no more troubled on the subject; but, on the contrary, if he thought so well of the

drama, as to resolve on a trial of its effect in the theatre, his friend would then bring the unknown author to breakfast with him on any morning, that he might choose to appoint. This preliminary was firmly agreed on, that the latent Author should not be called forth, unless Garrick was deliberately determined to represent the tragedy.

After a few weeks of anxious suspense, in the year 1770, a billet arrived from my friend to name the morning, in which we were invited to breakfast with the Manager in Southampton Street. On our arrival at his house we were conducted into a little private apartment, where Garrick soon saluted me with a profusion of compliments: "I assure you, my dear Sir," he exclaimed, "that I have not seen for many years any new play, of which I conceived such very high expectations; but of this we will talk at more leisure, Mrs. Garrick has a little circle of literary friends to breakfast with us this morning, some of them have the honor of knowing you, and speak of you with the greatest regard, but I believe the tea is made—pray let me introduce you to Mrs. Garrick, who is very eager for the pleasure of seeing you."

We proceeded to pay our compliments to the queen of the house, who understood and practised the art of saying agreeable things to her visitors not less than the theatrical monarch himself. The company, we found assembled, consisted of persons, who shone in conversation, and after an hour or two of sprightly general discourse, they withdrew, when my friend began to enter on our particular business with the Manager. Garrick observed, that the morning had almost elapsed without his being aware how late it was; pleaded his pressing avocations, and entreated us to breakfast with him again on the following Tuesday. This passed on a Saturday. We most cheerfully accepted the cordial invitation, and returned again to this sovereign of the theatre, charmed with his affability, and full of the most towering hopes inspired by the warm and friendly interest, that he appeared to take in the prospect of a young dramatic author's success.

Our second breakfast did not pass with all the ease and gaiety of the first; and when it was over, Garrick, with an embarrassed air, and a long face, said to my friend, "I have been considering more deliberately the tragedy, with which you have favored

me—it is a most elegant composition, it is beautiful in language, but I think it wants action; and I doubt if it will suit the stage." My friend began to remonstrate—but Garrick interrupted him by saying to me "We will certainly represent it, if you desire it, but I am inclined to think——"? "O no sir," I exclaimed, "I would by no means wish it to be played, if you have the least doubt of its success: I shall instantly put it in my pocket, and am heartily sorry, that it has given you this unnecessary trouble." The manager looked ashamed, the poet indignant. We parted however with many expressions of civility, and mutual good wishes; not without profuse offers of service on any future occasion from the inimitable actor, whose talents were so fascinating, that however he might offend, he was sure of being forgiven by those, who had feelings to be charmed by his theatrical excellence.

My friend, who had confided in the word of Garrick as his old confidential companion, was much hurt, that he treated us with such needless duplicity and deception: but, in discussing all circumstances, we agreed, that his apparent insincerity was not originally intended. The fact probably was, that he

had really conceived all the high hopes of the play, that he expressed in our first conference; but it had several defects, and these were forcibly impressed on his mind, by some of his privy counsellors, in the interval between our first and second visit to his house. We had reason to suspect an insidious enemy in the business, but as the suspicion had not the support of any absolute proof, I will not name the person, who was supposed to have prejudiced the mind of the Manager against a drama, of which he had professed himself so fervent an admirer.

I was willing enough to allow, that there were considerable deficiences in the Tragedy; but was confident, that many plays with much greater imperfections had succeeded on the stage; and I was deeply chagrined, that I had suffered Garrick artfully to draw me forth from the privacy, which I loved; and to make me the dupe of his adulation. With these sentiments I was disposed to abjure all intercourse with the despotic sovereigns of the theatre; and glowing with an irresistible propensity to poetical composition I soon began what I then regarded as the chief desideratum in the literature of my country, a national Epic Poem: But when I

had finished some cantos of it, I was rendered unable to proceed in an enterprize so arduous by the unseasonable death of an inestimable friend, the early associate, confidant, and encourager of all my studies, John Thornton, of Hertfordshire, whose exemplary character I endeavoured to delineate in the poem, that I inscribed to his memory soon after his decease. He had taken a peculiar interest in the commencement and progress of the larger work, in which I had advanced; but as one of my incentives to proceed in it was the warm and friendly delight, with which I knew he would contemplate its conclusion, in losing him I felt disqualified for resuming an extensive composition, which reminded me too painfully of the loss I had sustained. The dramatic muse had been the goddess of my earliest poetical idolatry; and to her, notwithstanding several theatrical disappointments, I have never ceased to devote many of my studious hours, in composing a variety of plays, though but a few of them have hitherto ventured to solicit the favor of the public, by appearing in print.

I confess that I have ever felt much parental tenderness for my eldest dramatic offspring, and

perhaps the more from the mortifying disfavor, with which it was treated by Garrick. Many years after that unprosperous adventure, I was tempted to revise the neglected tragedy, to change the scene from Spain to Sicily, and to give it the new title of Eudora, the name of its heroine. In this state, one of my early friends recommended it to the notice of that accomplished though unfortunate soldier, that elegant and successful dramatic writer, the late General Burgoyne. Let me here endeavour justly and gratefully to commemorate the politeness, the critical talents, and the rare benevolence of that amiable departed veteran, by shewing the singular pains he took to befriend a younger dramatist, whose success in one line of authorship he kindly believed not equal to his desert. I would rather be censured for vanity in appearing too much elated by his praise, than fail to shew in a full light his extreme candour and critical goodnature. I was personally a stranger to the General, when he kindly examined my unfortunate drama: he returned it with many sheets of excellent remarks, and the following letter to a gentleman, who was intimate with us both.

The person I allude to, is recently deceased; he

was a scholar of the liveliest intellectual powers, united to a most friendly heart, which had prompted him to introduce the tragedy in question to the General. When I began this preface, I had some hopes that the publication, might serve to interest and amuse my suffering friend, under the confinement of long illness; but his decease, which happened while the plays were in the press, affords me only the mournful gratification of mentioning his name with that tenderness, which is due to an invariable friendship of almost half a century.

To DAVID STEVENSON, Esq.

Hertford Street, September 16, 1787.

My dear Stevenson,

I have always admired the writings of your friend, Mr. Hayley, but I have read none of his productions with so much pleasure as Eudora; and the more I consider it, the greater repugnance I find in communicating the criticism I promised you; I bring myself to do it upon the presumption, that you will give both the text and the com-

ment due thought, and not let a word of mine pass further, that has not the sanction of your judgment.

The order I mean to follow is first to state my observations upon separate parts, which I wish the Author to revise: they are very few in comparison of the beauties, which could not be retouched even by his own hand without injury.

I shall in the next place consider the piece with a view to representation, and the present state of the English Theatre: and shall venture to suggest the idea of a considerable alteration in the plan.

I need not detain you by any farther preface from the task I have enjoined you of becoming a sincere arbiter of all I have advanced.

I am, my dear Sir,

Ever truly yours,

J. BURGOYNE.

This letter was accompanied with four sheets of observations upon particular passages, and three more of general observations with a view to representation. The latter may be regarded as a little dramatic essay full of good sense, and good taste. It breathes so evidently the pure spirit of a polite scholar, a gentleman, and a friend, that I hope I am paying a proper and grateful tribute to the memory of the writer, by introducing a great part of it into this preface.

General Observations.

"Having ventured, though with great diffidence and deference, to offer several remarks on separate passages in the tragedy of Eudora, I proceed now to consider it upon the whole as calculated for representation. In this point of view I confess it partakes, *in some scenes*, of the character of Addison's Cato, of Elfrida, and other dramatic poems, of which too much cannot be said in regard to imagination, expression, harmony of numbers, and many other beauties: We may go farther in this instance, and add a just encomium upon the conduct and moral, as conformable to the rules laid down by the Grecian school, and the most esteemed commentators upon it; and yet, a theatrical something may be wanting for popular acceptation in this age and nation.

"I will endeavour to explain what the something is, and how the want of it applies to Eudora in its present state.

"Shakespeare, the glory of our country as the most sublime and captivating poet, that ever wrote, may be said, in one sense, to have hurt the English

stage. His genius carried him above rules; and succeeding writers, to whom nature had given no such pretentions, were supported by the prejudice he had created in imitating his licence. Hence the gross violation of the unities of time and place, and the load of dead, that deformed the last scene of almost every tragedy, became subjects of censure and ridicule.

"In the mean time the French carried the reformation of these faults to an excess equally absurd: In many instances they polished away the very essence of tragedy, terror and pity, and established delicacy upon the ruin of feeling.

"Among other evils resulting from this pedantic purity, I would point out particularly to attention that remarked by Mr. Addison, and I think mentioned by Dryden also somewhere in his prefaces, *of throwing the most important part of the catastrophe into narration in place of producing it in action.* The elder Corneille and Racine, whose genius for the sublime no one will dispute, adopted this practice, and often became lukewarm and languid only from so doing.

"Much respect is due to the decorum, and

preservation of probability, on the Greek and Roman stages; but I am not

"Sic fautor veterum"

as not to think, that much greater latitude in both those points, than is to be found in any of their pieces, that have come down to us, might be indulged without any violence to the understanding. I almost persuade myself from some passages, I could point out in ancient authors, that they themselves admitted it, at least in a degree beyond what their modern translators and commentators are willing to allow. Horace, who thoroughly understood the subject, while he reprobates the introduction of the murdering knife of Medea, in less shocking instances is strongly for action in preference to narration:

"Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus, et quæ
Ipse sibi tradit spectator."

And is it positively certain, that he does not countenance the magic of the poet even to the extent that Shakespeare exercised?

When "With imagined wing our swift scene flies
In motion of no less celerity
Than that of thought — — —

— — — jumping o'er times,
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour glass."

Such is the natural import of the words of Horace,

— — — — — —

" Ut magus; et modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis."

I am perfectly aware that most interpreters understand this as applying to different pieces, and not to change of place in the same piece. It will be allowed me nevertheless that there is more *magic* exemplified in one interpretation, than in the other.

" But to have done with digressive conjectures and to return to the modern stage.

" The taste in England has not yet arrived at that true medium between the latitude of our former school, and the restrictions of that supposed by the French to be established upon the principles of the ancients. In fact the approach towards a medium has of late years been made by our neighbours; Voltaire in particular has done more towards restoring the use the of dagger and the change of scenes, than any of our writers, except mere translators, have endeavoured to do towards the abolition of such

liberties. A love of action, and the sight of great events grows out of our national temper; we leave narration to the epic, its natural province, and call out for the thing itself.

"I trust it will not be imagined from any thing I have said in objection to narration in tragedy in certain situations, that I wish to condemn it generally. Description is the soul of all poetry: and the tragic, as every other poet, has the history and imagery of nature open for his use. Narration, referring to parts of the fable antecedent to the opening of the action, is generally necessary; often beautiful; many instances will occur, where in delineating character it has a great effect——

"For once, upon a raw and gusty day
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
Cæsar said to me, dar'st thou, Cassius, now
Leap in with me into this angry flood,
And swim to yonder point? Upon the word,
Accouter'd as I was, I plunged in,
And bade him follow:" &c.

"During the proceeding of the action many incidents I admit, may be more properly related than brought to view; the distinction I would establish is this: When material, momentous incidents, upon

which the great interest of the drama rests, are proper for representation, they ought to be represented: The best powers of language, when employed in narrative, will fall very short in comparative effect.

" There are not I believe many exceptions to the above position, when judged of by an English audience. The only one that I recollect at present is the relation of the massacre of Pyrrhus in the tragedy of the Distrest Mother; but two circumstances essential to my present purpose are to be remarked in this example——the one is, that the story is told by Orestes, the person himself who has been the principal actor in the scene; the other, that a new incident, and one productive of more emotion than any in the whole play, arises immediately from the recital, viz. that of Hermione disavowing her own orders, and driving the wretched Orestes to madness—the part of the catastrophe *related*, instantly causes a *representation* of one more affecting to the passions.

" I have endeavoured to fortify myself by this long comparison between narration and action, as applicable to catastrophe, before I took the freedom of commenting upon the last act of Eudora; and I introduced the instance to which I have just now alluded,

to mark, that the circumstances under which narration is justifiable and productive of great effect, are very different from those, to which I am about to point.

"Camillo, unknown to the audience till the very moment, and who I am afraid, will appear little better than an episodical personage, is introduced for the purpose of relating the end of the story. The whole impression, that the unexpected catastrophe is to create, and to leave in the minds of the audience, depends upon this narration. I venture to contend that, in point of dramatic conduct, narration in this place would be objectionable, could it even be put into the mouth of a chief character; but how much will the objection be strengthened, in point of danger, when it is considered, that in the present state of our theatres, from the want of authority in the managers, and of condescension in the performers to accept parts they think subordinate, the part of poor Camillo would undoubtedly fall to the share of some wretched underling, who according to Shakespear's definition, might "seem to be made by Nature's journeymen, and not made well, he imitated humanity so abominably!"

"But the last circumstance of dissimilarity between the examples of "the Distrest Mother" and Eudora, and the one that has the greatest weight with me, is, that in the latter the event related is the most desirable of the whole story for representation. In the case of Pyrrhus, the sight of a magnanimous and amiable prince butchered at the altar might be inconsistent with the true rules of decorum; but the finely-imagined circumstances of a dying prince forgiving his unknown murderer, and the stings of conscience thereby excited in the breast of the guilty, are strictly dramatic; and in the hands of Mr. Hayley would make one of the most affecting scenes possible. This is the great object of alteration I am intent to recommend—make what is now described to have passed between the prince and the confessor, the grand action of the last act.

"Should Mr. Hayley be induced to make a beginning in this alteration of plan, I am sanguine in my belief that he would find great pleasure in the work as he advanced. The alteration would give the Author fine opportunities to work up the character of Eudora higher, preserving all its present tenderness, and

much, very much of its language: I cannot speak too highly of either.

"Here end the observations that have occurred upon the subject of Eudora.

"The indispensable avocations in which General Burgoyne has been sometime engaged may be admitted perhaps as some apology for keeping the manuscript so long in his hands; but he is conscious the crudeness of his remarks, as well as the freedom of them, require a more sufficient excuse. He therefore repeats a request already made that it may be kept in mind that all his comments were calculated for the intermediate inspection and opinion of Mr. Stevenson. Many things might be offered through the medium, and under the sanction, of so intimate a friend to Mr. Hayley that would appear presuming in one who had only the ambition of becoming such.

"General Burgoyne has only to throw himself upon the candour of Mr. Hayley, assuring him at the same time of the most sincere respect to his pen and his character."

I have a pleasure in producing these friendly observations because, although they display in the

strongest light the primary defect of the original play, I feel that the criticism does honor both to the head and heart of the writer. Indeed all the language, and all the conduct of the General, in the various trouble he took to serve me on this occasion, may be justly admired as an example of that politeness, sincerity, and benevolence with which men of letters should treat each other. I hope I was not unworthy of his favor: assuredly I was willing to learn, and to correct the faults of my composition by the kind assistance of a censor so intelligent, and so liberal.

In writing to thank my critical friend for the honour of his remarks I said to him "Had I been fortunate enough to receive such remarks eighteen years ago, when the play was written, I have the vanity to believe, I could have rendered it what you wish in adopting your admirable hint for the improvement of the catastrophe. Whether many afflictions, and much ill health may have left me spirit enough to compose so bold and forcible a conclusion, as you justly require, I cannot presume to say; but I feel that your animating praise inspires me with a wish to deserve it, and I will certainly make an attempt, which I shall be happy to submit

to your decision. I think I can accomplish your plan for the last act without touching any of its predecessors, in which there seems to be no deficiency of action."

I soon returned the tragedy to my indulgent critic with another fifth act; he not only praised the manner in which I had executed the striking improvement he had suggested, but endeavoured with the most friendly zeal to promote the immediate representation of the play on the stage of Drury Lane. Prior engagements of the manager rendered this impracticable, but the dramas for a private theatre, which I had published in the spring of 1784, had procured for me some degree of influence with the manager of Covent Garden. It was a singular occurrence, that as soon as I printed the dramas not intended for a public stage, the managers of different theatres vied with each other in eagerness to represent them. The late Mr. Colman exhibited Lord Russell in the Hay-Market; and when Mr. Harris, who had also requested leave to represent Marcella, was preparing to exhibit that tragedy of three acts in Covent Garden; his rival of Drury Lane endeavoured to get the start of him and produced Marcella

so hastily and imperfectly *got up*, to use a technical phrase of the theatre, that he was obliged to relinquish the play. This incident was imparted to me in a polite and friendly billet from Mr. Harris.

That gentleman had said to me in a letter of October in the same year "I shall regard it as one of the most fortunate events of my life, if I can fairly bring you to a determination of being a dramatic author, I mean for the stage, which certainly holds out much greater rewards of fame, delight, and profit, than any other species of composition."

These very liberal overtures of theatrical favor induced me to present Eudora in her improved state to Mr. Harris. He received her in a friendly manner, and with the most lively hopes of success. The play was rehearsed in January 1790, and at one of the rehearsals a pleasant and sanguine friend said to me "I would ensure the success of this tragedy for a china orange." The play however did not succeed, and I gave at the time an account of its failure in a letter to an intimate friend long since deceased, and as that letter was restored to me, I will now transcribe from it what appears to me a just and candid history of the unexpected event.

February 7, 1790.

" For my own part I can assure you with the utmost sincerity, that I am a philosopher on this occasion, and in perfect charity with all the world. I think indeed that many worse tragedies than mine have succeeded, but I am by no means so partial to my own composition, as to believe it had a clear title to absolute success. The part of my heroine was admirably played by Mrs. Pope, and some of the male characters were creditably sustained: the four first acts passed with great and general applause, but in the fifth I had ventured, on the suggestion of a kind and excellent, critic, to introduce a very hazardous scene; the body of a poisoned prince on a litter, and a priest struck with remorse on being keenly questioned by Eudora in the presence of this apparent corse. This spectacle produced an effect on the audience very different from what we intended. The litter made a grotesque, instead of a solemn appearance; the important part of the priest was not solemnly supported, and the scene was wofully hissed. I could have changed the offensive passage very rapidly by substituting the scene as it was originally written, but this would only have left us a smooth, and too tame a fifth act, for the alteration tho' unfortunate, was, in my own opinion, a great improvement of the original play, and had it been happily exhibited it would I think have produced the proper, successful effect.

"As it was, I determined to withdraw the play rather than expose the Manager, who had been very polite and friendly to me, to the chance of thin houses, and I am pleased to find that most of my friends approve my conduct in this particular, tho' some of them were so kindly partial to the production as to believe, it would have forced itself into public favor, had it not been withdrawn."

The play indeed, though one scene had excited vehement disapprobation, was by no means absolutely condemned in the theatre; so far from it, that when I entered the breakfast room of General Burgoyne early in the morning after the representation of Eudora, he exclaimed, "I give you joy of your success." To which I replied, "do you call such a reception success, General? it will not satisfy me; as an author on the stage I must have full and unequivocal applause or none at all; I have withdrawn the tragedy." "Have you indeed—I do not think that was necessary, for with a little improvement in the decoration, and acting of the scene, it would have produced its proper effect——yet I applaud your spirit." To these kind expressions of the General, I replied by quoting a passage from Ovid,

"Careat successibus opto
Quisquis ab eventu facta notanda putat."

I have given this long and frank history of my earliest tragedy in the hope, that the occurrences relating to it may prove a useful lesson to young ingenuous dramatic writers, and put them on their guard against the various perils of sanguine expectation.

To persons who have a propensity to theatrical composition, to invent and write a play is one of the most delightful exercises in which imagination can engage. An exercise so alluring, that it may easily divert the fervent mind of youth from more profitable studies; and the more easily, as it seems to promise most ample rewards both of honor and emolument. When I first began to write for the stage, though lucre was far from being the object of my ambition, I paid no great respect to such advice, as represented that employment an idle and unprofitable waste of time. On the contrary, as I felt that I had sufficient stores in my mind to furnish abundance of dramatic compositions, I presumed that I might, in case of such exigence, very easily derive a decent income from the theatre. Had I depended for support on that visionary Peru of young poets,—such an illusion might have been ruinous indeed, for after

writing many dramas, and enjoying the pleasure of hearing several of them applauded by accomplished critics, and some even extolled by managers, I have never derived from the stage the slightest emolument. Of this however I am very far from complaining; on the contrary I ascribe it rather to good, than to evil fortune, that I was not tempted by early, and splendid prosperity in the theatre, to relinquish all kinds of composition except the dramatic. In that case it is probable I should never have found leisure, and opportunities to produce those more extensive performances, which, as the public has honored them with much favor, I may be allowed to regard as satisfactory memorials of my industry. Every creditable author, who takes a retrospect over his own writings, through a series of years, will probably find, that their reception from the public has been sometimes above, and sometimes below their desert. I am inclined to think this may have been the case with myself, although in my literary adventures of many years, I have often gratefully acknowledged the indulgence and liberality of my country. Of all my productions I believe my unprinted plays have had the hardest lot, and I therefore consider it

as a point of paternal justice to present a little group of the least culpable of them to the notice of that public, whose general kindness I am acknowledging.

I had once some thoughts of giving such a history of the origin and the destiny of each drama in this collection, as I have given of Eudora; but, as my preface might thus extend to an inordinate length, I will content myself with saying, they are so far original, that I am not conscious of having borrowed a single scene or character from any dramatic author, domestic, or foreign, and, to quote the words of the high-spirited Alfieri in reviewing his own plays——"Conchiudo quanto alla invenzione delle presenti tragedie ch'elle potranno esser forse o parere mediocri ed anche, se si vuole, cattive, ma che non potranno elle mai esser guidicate non mie."

Pope said in a preface to his poems, "In this office of collecting my pieces I am altogether uncertain, whether to look upon myself as a man building a monument, or burying the dead."

The latter idea may seem more properly to belong to an author, who is publishing a group of dramatic pieces, that have long been suffered

"to lie in cold obstruction."

But, whether a writer of tragedy is naturally more sanguine in his hopes of applause, than other poets, or whether my vanity is more presumptuous than that of the poetical fraternity in general, I will frankly confess, that I feel an enlivening, though possibly an illusive persuasion, that when this selection of dramas is printed, some adventurous manager may be inclined to give a fair trial to one or two of them on the stage: and scenes that have excited most cordial approbation from such judges of literature as Burgoyne and Gibbon, may yet be rescued from oblivion by the generous plaudits of an English theatre, patronizing characters and sentiments not ill-suited, I trust, to the meridian of England.

The reader will find that in the group of the present plays I have endeavoured to give a dramatic existence to one of the Cambrian bards, who fell martyrs to the barbarity of Edward the first. If my powers to execute that design, were but happily proportioned to what I feel on the capabilities of the subject, the tragedy entitled "The Heroine of Cambria" could hardly fail to be popular in this country. Perhaps there can be but little chance of its being so highly favored, before I have quitted the stage of life,

but the mere possibility that it may prove so at a more distant period, is, in the hours of cheerful meditation, sufficient to warm and enliven a sanguine spirit, inclined in all the vicissitudes of fortune, still to hope the best both for himself, and for his country.

On this occasion a good-natured critic may allow me here to repeat a sentiment expressed in my Epistles to Gibbon, in suggesting to him the high privileges of a successful writer: and I may be forgiven for indulging the ambitious idea, that some of my long-suppressed compositions may yet

> "From unborn beauty still to fancy dear,
> Draw with soft magic the delightful tear,
> Or thro' the bosom of far distant youth
> Spread the warm glow of liberty and truth."

Felpham, March 1811.

EUDORA:

A TRAGEDY.

Tantumque nefas patrio excidit ore?

VIRGIL.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

THE KING OF SICILY.
MAJONE, *his prime Minister.*
VERINO, *an old General.*
RAYMOND, *his Son.*
SICARDI.
UBERTO, *a Priest.*
LELIO, *an Attendant of Verino.*
OFFICER.
SOLDIERS.
SERVANTS.

EUDORA, *the Wife of Raymond.*

SCENE—SICILY.

EUDORA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—THE PALACE.

VERINO. *(Meeting an Officer.)*

Hast thou inform'd Eudora of our triumph,
And will she quickly follow to the palace
The happiest of fathers?

OFFICER.

Yes, my Lord;
Your lovely daughter, in a grateful transport,
Charg'd me to thank you for the joyous summons,
Which she is hastening to obey.

VERINO.

'Tis well.

(Exit Officer.

These blest achievements of my son, impart

New being to my soul. Yet this high joy
Seems incomplete, till I rejoice with her,
Whose beauty, and whose love, inspir'd his valor;
Whose faithful purity, and fervent prayers,
Have won the watchful ministers of heaven
To turn all evil from her fearless hero
In danger's darkest hour—O! love, and joy
Are light of foot, and lead her swiftly to me!

SCENE II.

VERINO, EUDORA.

VERINO.

Rejoice, rejoice, sweet partner of our glory!
Soon thou shalt meet thy dear victorious lord,
The blessing of my age, the young preserver
Of wasted Sicily.—He comes to pay thee
With love, ennobled by successful courage,
For all thy pains of fond anxiety.

EUDORA.

My proud heart pants to fold him to itself;
To question him on all his glorious share
In this brave enterprise; and while he speaks
Of peril hardly 'scaped, with shuddering joy
Clasp my safe hero, and devoutly pour
Tears of extatic gratitude to Heaven!
But when, my dear Lord, when shall we behold him?

VERINO.

The Prince and Raymond are now hastening hither
From their triumphant Camp; eager to taste
The fruits of victory, and meet th' applause

Of a deliver'd nation. All Palermo
Stands on the watch of joyous expectation
To pour its welcome to those youthful victors,
Who have so nobly driven, I trust for ever,
The Moorish spoilers from our fruitful Isle.

EUDORA.

It is a blest exploit! Reward it, Heaven,
With long, long years of happiness and fame!

VERINO.

The wily Moors had, by a nightly march,
Surprised our ardent and incautious army,
And gain'd the prince's tent; his sacred blood
In that dread hour had issued at the stroke
Of midnight murder, had not Raymond then
Like lightning, darting through the gloomy storm,
Repell'd the black assassins, and restored
His prince to Life, to Victory, and Honor.

EUDORA.

A people's thanks, and everlasting praise
Shall crown the noble deed.

VERINO.

The generous Prince
Has own'd the mighty debt—He bade the camp
Shew choicest honors to his brave deliverer,
And tells the world, that he regards my son
As bound in closest friendship to his soul.

EUDORA.

O may that friendship, yes! it must, endure
Uninjured, undiminish'd! the corrupt,
The brittle ties, that vice and folly form,

Shrink at the power of accident and time;
But friendship, founded on superior virtue,
Unshaken stands, and like its base, immortal.

VERINO.

True! thou dear eulogist!—but hark! our Sovereign—
Wilt thou retire awhile?

(Exit Eudora.

SCENE III.

THE KING, MAJONE, VERINO, OFFICERS.

VERINO.

Still may success
Unwearied wait upon our Royal Master!

THE KING.

Thanks! my old Soldier, who from earliest days
With unremitted ardor hast display'd
Thy gallant spirit in thy sovereign's cause!
I joy, that Raymond has so well pursued
The bright example of thy youth, and by
Transcendent valor proved himself thy son.

VERINO.

Thank Heaven! my boy has not disgraced our name!

THE KING.

He has preserv'd the honor of my crown:
A nation's thanks shall to the world proclaim
How well he has deserv'd; and in our love
Next to the prince our son, henceforth we hold him.

VERINO.

Make him, kind Heaven! O make him ever worthy
These praises of his king!

THE KING.

Does not thy heart, Verino,
Pant with impatience for the wish'd return
Of our brave sons, in whom with pride we see
The glorious scenes of our past youth renew'd?

VERINO.

Would they were entering glad Palermo's Gates!

THE KING.

Ere noon they will be here: throughout the city
Triumphant songs, festivity and mirth,
Shall speak aloud their welcome.

SCENE IV.

THE KING, MAJONE, EUDORA, VERINO, OFFICERS.

EUDORA.

Health, and glory,
Still shed their blessings on my gracious liege!
A Courier from the prince is just arrived:
Farther I have not learnt.

THE KING,

Thanks for thy news,
My gentle Fair!—Go bring him to our presence!
(Exit Officer.
Thou soon, Eudora, shalt behold thy Raymond
Adorn'd with glory equal to thy charms;

And be it long ere we shall call again
His ardent spirit to the field of peril
To fill thy heart with terror! well I know
How quick thy tender bosom takes alarm,
And trembles, anxious for a husband's safety.

EUDORA.

I must confess, my liege, a woman's weakness;
But tho' my frame will shudder at the thought
Of dangers, that my gallant Lord derides,
I trust I still have courage to adopt
His own just estimate of human blessings,
And hold his honor dearer than his life!

THE KING.

Thy mind, still better than thy matchless beauty,
Deserves a soldier's heart.

SCENE V.

THE KING, MAJONE, VERINO, EUDORA, SICARDI.

THE KING.

What from the Prince?
Thy looks already have forerun thy tongue,
And chill'd my blood with fear: all is not well:
But speak, and let us hear the worst!

SICARDI.

Dread Sire!
The shades of death seem hovering o'er the Prince!

THE KING.

O say, where I may find the hapless youth,

And haste to throw a father's arms around him?

SICARDI.

Upon the road from Mazara, and lodged
Within the castle of the Count Verino
I left my royal Lord; ere my departure
Relentless death had more than half subdued
Contending nature, and I fear ere this
Has to the realms of endless peace consign'd
The people's darling, and the soldier's pride!

THE KING.

Is this the triumph, which my eager soul
Thirsted with fond impatience to behold!
But let me hear each dreadful circumstance!—

SICARDI.

Ere yester sun was set, the prince then warm
With present joy, and thoughts of future fame,
By chosen friends attended reach'd the castle:
Lord Raymond, on the wings of duteous love,
Had sped before him, eager to prepare
For the reception of his royal guest:
In sweet society and genial mirth
The happy evening past. The pride of conquest
Glowed in each breast, and shone in every eye.
Little 'twas thought the morrow would reverse
Our fairest expectations: but, ere morn,
Severest tortures seized the unhappy prince,
Convulsive pangs so shook his laboring frame,
That scarce the semblance of himself remained.

THE KING.

What! all the vigor of his blooming youth!
All in a moment blasted— Oh my child!

SICARDI.

The quick disease still gather'd strength, and mocked
The weak attempts of art.

THE KING.

Insatiate death!
In all the battle's rage didst thou withhold
Thy unrelenting shaft, to wound more deeply,
And strike the hero in his hour of triumph?

MAJONE.

O yet my liege, indulge not this despair!
Nature, assisted by the strength of youth,
Oft throws the burden of diseases from her,
And is again herself.

THE KING.

No, no, Majone,
Has he not said there is no room for hope?
And see a second messenger of death!

OFFICER, *(entering hastily.)*

Scarce have I power to tell my royal master,
That all our hope, our joy, is now no more.

THE KING.

Support me gracious Heaven!—Lead me, Majone,
Lead to my chamber!—Stay—yet would I know—
Speak thou, Sicardi, did the power of art
Find no immediate cause?—Why dost thou turn?
Why shrink, unwilling to resolve my question?
I charge thee speak!

SICARDI.

Since you command my voice,

I must unfold, my liege, the painful truth:
It is confest no common cause, no ill,
Of all the train, which haunt the life of man
And tend by known degrees to dissolution,
Could thus have rack'd the suffering frame with torture
And led to speedy agonizing death:
Some baleful drug, some quick prevailing poison.—

THE KING.

What! poison saidst thou?

MAJONE.

No! it cannot be:
Whence could proceed attempts against a life,
Which all confess much dearer than their own?

THE KING.

If there's a villain, whose pernicious soul
Could form a crime of this infernal hue,
Mark him, just Heaven for my signal vengeance!
But utter all particulars!—I'll hear
Thy bare suspicions!

SICARDI.

At your sacred word
I must perforce constrain my tongue to speak
What in this presence, it would fain suppress:
The Prince's friends, in wildness of their grief,
Have thrown suspicion, where there least was cause,
And e'en accused Lord Raymond.

THE KING.

Ha! sayst thou Raymond!

VERINO.

Lyar and slave! 'tis false—no voice but thine

Had dared to sully his illustrious name:
I know thou think'st my age.—

THE KING.

Peace! Peace! Verino;
Grief and distraction have o'erwhelm'd my senses,
Trust me, brave veteran, if thy son be wrong'd—
I would, but cannot speak to thee, till time
Aids my crush'd faculties to bear this anguish.

(Exit, leaning on Majone, with attendants.

SCENE VI.

SICARDI, VERINO, EUDORA.

VERINO.

" If he be wrong'd!"—hast thou so soon forgot
The debt, thou once hadst virtue to acknowledge?
But 'tis affliction's privilege to speak
What cool reflection will disclaim—for thee,
Thou villian slanderer.

SICARDI.

Indeed, my Lord,
I spake no more than duty bade me utter.

VERINO.

Confusion mar the organs of thy speech
And sense forsake thee for thy vile aspersion!

EUDORA.

Revered Verino, let thy daughter's voice
Soothe the wild tumult of thy troubled soul!

Soon shall we see my injured Lord return,
And clear his honor to the admiring world:
Then let not passion thus distract my father,
But let his heart be still!

VERINO.

Be *still*, my daughter!
Thy voice, Eudora, would as soon persuade
Our Etna's bursting caverns to be still,
When, in its gulph the fiery tempest swells.
Thou little know'st the niceties of honor;—
Honor! the wealth, the being of a Soldier!
If sharpest arrows pierce the tortured flesh,
'Tis in the power of art to soothe its anguish,
And make the shatter'd fibres join again:
But tenderer honor! if that chance to suffer,
E'en lightly suffer, with malicious joy
Envy will fret the wound, that slander gave,
Increase its pangs, and force it ne'er to close!

SICARDI.

I hope, my Lord, and doubt not, but Lord Raymond
Will make the world confess these strange suspicions
Have done him greatest wrong.

VERINO.

Villain! tis false;
I know what hopes such beings as Sicardi
Have harbour'd of my son—But hence!—be gone!
Away!—thy sight is painful to my eyes,
And my soul sickens but to hear thy voice:
Hence! and expect my vengeance!

SICARDI.

Know, my Lord,
I am not used to brook such insolence:

But age and grief claim pity more than anger,
And make me pardon, what I else would punish.
(*Exit.*

SCENE VII.

VERINO, EUDORA.

VERINO.

Talk'st thou to me of pardon? gracious Heaven!
Why have I lived to this? O tell me why
You suffer thus to creep on earth a wretch,
Once great in arms, now doomed to stand exposed,
Weak, and unable to revenge the scorn,
Which every passing coward heaps upon him!
Return! return! sole succour of my age!
Return, my Son! in whom alone I live!
Come thou to heal the sufferings of my soul,
To throw dishonor back upon our foes,
And crush the slaves, who dare insult thy father!

EUDORA.

Yes! he will come, with all-enlightening virtue,
Come, to confound the dark designs of falsehood,
And bid our troubled hearts revive again.

VERINO.

I think he will, Eudora! but alas!
Now that the fiercer fit of rage has left me,
Distracting thoughts rush in upon my mind:
The Prince, whose loss I feel with truest sorrow,
Dead on the sudden!—under Raymond's roof!—
O, if ambition—if the lust of power,
Could have so far—No! no! I will not think it;—
Yet whence could this——

EUDORA.

O my most honor'd Father,
Let not the trouble of your soul so far
O'erwhelm your reason, as to make you doubt
Of things impossible.

VERINO.

Impossible!
Thou well, my child, mayst call impossible,
What to thy nature must appear most strange;
Thou ne'er hast felt but gentle, fond desires;
Softness beyond thy sex, unclouded truth,
And sweet serenity of soul are thine:
Hence little knowst thou of the mind of man,
That wild, tempestuous, ever-shifting scene,
Where noblest faculties oft only serve
To minister to vice—where the fierce shock
Of lawless thoughts and turbulent desires
Will oft destroy the fairest plans of action,
By virtue form'd, and ratified by reason.

EUDORA.

Tho' little read in knowledge of mankind,
I know the heart, the inmost soul of Raymond
Incapable of ill, and true to honor;
His passions swell not to a wild excess,
And combat only on the side of virtue.

VERINO.

There, there, dear daughter, is my sole support;
Could I believe—no! thou hast rightly said:
It is impossible: and I have injured
My generous boy in doubting but a moment.—
Struck by the lustre of superior truth

The King shall own that they have basely wrong'd
him:
Our country too, if she can be deceived,
Shall soon repent the error, and behold,
With conscious pride, her young deliverer,
Shine forth again with undiminish'd glory.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

MAJONE, SICARDI.

MAJONE.

Thanks, thou excelling minister of vengeance!
How was the happy fraud at first received?
How did they credit him, who dared accuse
Their new raised idol, Raymond?

SICARDI.

O my Lord,
Our sanctified Uberto has the power
To work still greater wonders—as I live,
I think he holds the popular opinion
But as his puppet; for unseen he guides it,
And to his purpose gives it voice and action.

MAJONE.

He is a creature of most deep devices,
And exquisite hypocrisy: but wanting
Thy heart, Sicardi, he excites my doubts:
I wish we could have spared his services,
Important as they are.

SICARDI.

Impossible,
My noble Lord—consider but his office!
He as the Prince's confessor must watch
His closing life, and——

MAJONE.

I know it—this assoc ate
Was needful to us—he is firmly ours;
And yet my heart forebodes some evil fro m him.

SICARDI.

Dismiss your fears, since all his hopes of fortune
Must rise and fall with your prosperity!
Remember too, how far we stand indebted
To his rare chymic skill! his hand prepared
The drug of subtlest potency, that ended
Your enemy's existence.

MAJONE.

You beheld
Its forceful agency!

SICARDI.

My lord, I did;
And finding its effect most rapid, flew
To bring you the great tidings, while Uberto
Exerts his priestly arts to make the people

Believe the Prince's death the deed of Raymond.

MAJONE.

'Tis well Sicardi; but we must not trust
That shifting sand, the popular opinion;
While yet our story holds in wild amaze
The gaping vulgar, we must try, my friend,
To make suspicion wear the face of proof.
I and Verino have this morn exchanged
Mutual professions of sincerest friendship.

SICARDI.

Will not Verino, or his wary son
Suspect a rival's friendship?

MAJONE.

'Tis the curse
Of fools to hold suspicion a dishonor.
I will persuade him, that some unknown foe
Misguides the afflicted King, who threatens Raymond
With all, that vengeance can inflict upon him.
Verino's pride will kindle at the thought,
And madly drive him to some desperate deed,
Which, having sunk them in the King's esteem,
O'erwhelms at once the father and the son.

SICARDI.

Your soul, my Lord, was surely form'd for empire,
And smiling fortune leads you to that grandeur,
Which nature seemed to claim for you, in framing
Your princely faculties.

MAJONE.

At length, my friend
My happier genius has begun to triumph—

Now it exerts its power. There was a time
When abject passion, when a foolish girl,
Engross'd my every thought, and held my mind
Enslaved, enervated. Thanks to her folly!
Eudora soon dipell'd the weak illusion.
My soul awaking from that idle dream,
Rose, with new vigor, to the warm pursuit
Of sovereign greatness.

SICARDI.

The Sicilian sceptre,
Now sinking from the palsied hand of age,
Shall soon be given to thy superior guidance.

MAJONE.

Yes my Sicardi, by the prince's fall,
The paths of empire open to my view,
Clear of obstruction—but the sweets of vengeance,
Vengeance alone demands our present care:
Thou shalt repent thee of thy simple choice,
Ill-judging girl! O how my heart will swell
With the proud triumph of revenge—to see thee
Weep o'er the fallen minion of thy wishes,
And curse thy abject fate! but hence, Sicardi,
I must with keen attendance watch the King,
Work to a storm his undecided passions
And teach the bursting tempest where to fall!

(Exit Sicardi.

Now fair deceit
Inspire my tongue, and let my clamorous sorrow
Assume the semblance of a generous zeal!

SCENE II.

THE KING, MAJONE.

THE KING, *(entering.)*

Where, where, Majone is a Prince secure,
If all the blooming loveliness of youth
Crown'd with a mind benevolent as Heaven,
Can perish thus by treason?—O had I
Been born the humble lord of some poor cottage,
I had preserv'd my darling child in peace.
Now I've no comfort.

MAJONE.

O my royal master
I lov'd the prince, e'en as a father lov'd him,
And feel the sharpness of a father's sorrow;
Tis not within the power of art to make
Such woes seem light, or soothe the troubled mind
To calm oblivion of a loss like this!
Yet there is vengeance;—vengeance can unbind
The charm of grief, and o'er the fading cheek
Of cold affliction spread a smile of joy.

THE KING.

Could I with justice but revenge my son,
I think Majone, it would ease my soul
Of half the burden, that now weighs me down:
But ne'er, O ne'er let my misguided vengeance
Rashly condemn the innocent to bleed!

MAJONE.

Heaven shield the innocent! but shall our pride

Our empire's dear delight be ravish'd from us,—
Shall the brave youth, who fought his country's battles,
Untimely fall, by blackest treason fall,
And perish unreveng'd?—O had the wretch,
Whose treacherous heart could plan so base a deed,
Been born my brother, had he long been bound
In closest ties of friendship to my soul,
This hellish act would cancel every bond,
And I would drag him to the stroke of justice.

THE KING.

My kind Majone! well I know thy love
Is warm and zealous to revenge thy master:
Thou dost not think that Raymond can be guilty.

MAJONE.

I would not think it—but alas! my liege,
The lust of empire in the youthful mind
Can burst the ties of gratitude and honor,
And dare, beyond what honest men can think;
I've heard but now, that two of Raymond's train
Have publicly disclosed the dreadful deed
And proved their master's guilt—this may be false,
So do I hope, and so believe it is;
Yet while he stands accused, 'twere due respect
To that dear youth, whose memory I doat on,
To hold Lord Raymond prisoner, but so slightly,
As least may hurt his freedom and his fame.

THE KING.

Thou counsel'st well, Majone, but alas
This bitter trial has o'erpowered thy master!
My soul has lost its strength, and wearied life
Is hastening to its close: yet would I live
To see the hour of vengeance.—'Tis from thee,

From thee, my good Majone, I expect it:
My power be thine, and whosoe'er he be,
Tho' all the ministers of darkness hide him,
Produce the villain with such damning proof
That justice cannot pause! grant me but this,
And I will bow me to the will of Heaven,
Adore its mercies; and then die content.

SCENE III.

MAJONE, *(alone.)*

Thanks easy dotard! thou dost well to yield
Thy falling sceptre to an abler hand!
Majone prospers:—Be thyself my soul,
Nor let weak scruples mar thy towering thoughts!
The noble end gives sanction to the means,
And all, that leads to greatness, must be great;
Thou shalt be mine; Thou! that alone art worth
The wishes of a man, unbounded power!
Thou! at whose nod the sons of earth submit,
Wisdom grows mute, and beauty yields her pride.

(Exit.

SCENE IV.

RAYMOND, EUDORA.

RAYMOND.

Alas! Eudora, 'twas not thus I wish'd
To meet thy kind embraces; 'twas not thus

I thought to pay thee for the restless hours
Of tedious absence.

EUDORA.

Thou art still the same,
Still rich in virtue, and unrivall'd honor.
Dear to my soul, far dearer than when first
I fondly listen'd to thy tender vows,
And holy marriage made me thine for ever.

RAYMOND.

Will not thy heart, will not thy spotless soul,
So nobly great, and shrined in such a form,
Kings might be proud to share their empire with thee,
Will it not mourn its melancholy lot
Joined to a wretch, and wedded to dishonor?

EUDORA.

Canst thou; my Raymond, so unkindly question?
O had thy nature, (which it ne'er could be)
Had it been led from virtue's sacred paths,
Had some wild start of frenzy, or ambition
Plung'd thee, unthinking, in a crime so great,
Could I in misery, in guilt, forsake thee?
No! Raymond, no! when thy repentant soul,
As soon it must, had seen its fatal error,
I should have echoed sigh to thee for sigh;
I should have watched thee weeping, till our tears
With mingled streams had wash'd out the offence,
'Till Heaven with mercy had beheld our sorrows,
And healed thy wounded spirit with forgiveness.

RAYMOND.

O thou most perfect! best beloved of women!

EUDORA.

Yet, my dear Lord, I see thy troubled mind:
O let me soothe it! let me pour the balm
Of love into the wound, teach thee secure
In conscious virtue, to deride the malice
Of rancorous envy, to despise its arts,
Nor feel oppressed by phantoms of dishonor!

RAYMOND.

No! I am blest in thee, thou purest joy!
Thou richest treasure; thou divinest good,
That gracious Heaven, in fulness of its bounty,
E'er deigned to shed upon the sons of men!
Yet must our hearts lament the royal youth,
Whose hovering spirit calls aloud on me
To avenge his murder.

EUDORA.

Has thy friendly zeal
Unmasked the close assassin?

RAYMOND.

Heaven forgive me,
If my surmises wrong a troubled mind
As guiltless as my own—but I have seen
Those signs of hurry, fear, and purterbation
In the o'erbusy Priest, that——

VERINO. *(within.)*

Where is my Soldier, whose ungrateful country
Pays him for its security and fame
With all the indignities of vile suspicion?

RAYMOND.

Hark! my father!

I strongly wish, yet almost dread to meet him.
Leave me, my life, but for a few short minutes,
To calm his trouble; and I then will fly
To the soft bosom of my dear Eudora,
Whose love is honor, and whose words are peace!

(Exit Eudora.

SCENE V.

RAYMOND, VERINO.

VERINO. *(entering.)*

O my brave son! come to thy father's arms,
And pour thy spirit in this aged heart!

RAYMOND.

My lord! my father! tis to you I owe
The little value, which your son can boast;
To you, as to its judge, my grateful heart
Has ever bowed; each action of my life
Has ta'en its color from your voice alone;
Fame was imperfect, till confirmed by you;
And what is *slander*, which *you* disbelieve?

VERINO.

Shame to the wretch, who can behold thee Raymond,
And think thou art a villain; but my son,
What strange mysterious troubles hover o'er thee!
Whence are these wonders? and what murd'rous hand
Has ta'en the prince's life, and aims at thine?

Tell me, my son, how far thine eyes have pierced
Into this scene of darkness!

SCENE VI.

VERINO, RAYMOND, OFFICER WITH GUARDS.

OFFICER.

Pray my lord
Forgive the unwilling messenger of ill!
I have strict orders to arrest Lord Raymond,
And bear him instantly to close confinement.

VERINO.

By Heaven it shall not be: Old as I am,
I will not tamely see my child destroyed
By the base arts of deep designing villains.

RAYMOND.

My noble father, moderate your rage!
It is a soldier's glory to obey;
Were each man injured, to indulge his wrath,
And madly dare to be his own avenger,
The beauteous chain of order would be broken;
And horrid anarchy o'erturn the world.
For me, I hold it cowardice to doubt
The justice of my king, and freely pardon
This harsh command to his afflicted age!
Sir I obey.

VERINO.

I am reproved, my Raymond,
Pardon, thou gallant youth, thy father's frenzy!

And be the weakness of my soul forgotten
In the bright blaze of thy superior virtue!

SCENE VII.

MAJONE, VERINO, RAYMOND, OFFICER, &c.

MAJONE, *(entering hastily.)*

I come, Verino, as your friend, I come,
In just compassion to your suffering age,
And that brave youth, whose fame is basely wronged,
To warn you of the dangers that await you:
Have you received the king's commands? a fate
More horribly severe attends your son:
But these are matters for your private ear,
And claim your deepest thought—we must retire.

OFFICER.

My Lord, my orders were—

RAYMOND.

Sir, I attend you:
Be comforted my Father, for thy son
Is armed for every exigence,

VERINO.

Farewell,
Best portion of my being!

(Exit with Majone.

SCENE VIII.

RAYMOND, OFFICER AND GUARDS.

RAYMOND.

Thou, firm power,
Thou, Innocence, bright guardian of the soul!
Thou shalt support me still—thy chearing aid
Can make my dungeon luminous, or take
The stings of anguish from ignoble death!

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A PRISON.

MAJONE, SICARDI.

SICARDI.

Most fortunate prevention! had Verino
Once gained admittance to the troubled King,
His grief, his age, and proofs of service past,
Might have destroyed our hopes, and cancelled all
The King's suspicions on the guilt of Raymond!

MAJONE.

It might Sicardi; had not my precaution
Rendered such interview impossible.
O had you seen the proud old man repulsed
Grief, disappointment, anger, and despair
Convulsed his shattered frame.—Homeward at length
His servants bore him, overwhelm'd with rage,

And wanting power to threaten, or complain:
Soon as reviving nature gives him strength,
Hither I know he'll hasten to his son,

SICARDI.

Would you then meet him here?

MAJONE.

He shall not find me;
I came to place—but be it now thy care!
Find me some trusty soldier, who may watch
The son and father when they next shall meet,
And bring me instant tidings of their purpose.

SICARDI.

I fly, my Lord, to execute your wish.

MAJONE.

Stay, my Sicardi! I would have a letter
Despatched to Raymond from a friend unknown,
To heighten still their fear, and further urge them
To deeds of desperation—

SICARDI.

I, my Lord,
Live but to aid your great designs.

MAJONE.

My friend,
Prepare to reap, with me, the golden fruit!
Yet is our plan imperfect, till our arts
Can lead the King, by glaring marks of guilt,
To order Raymond to immediate death.

SICARDI.

And sudden it must be; suspicion else

May fire the troops, who worship as their idols
Verino, and his son.

MAJONE.

Thou sayst, Sicardi
Raymond oft quitted the expiring prince—

SICARDI.

Yes, my dear Lord, unable to support
That scene of agony, and pressed, I think,
To leave the chamber, by the calm Uberto,
Who wished not such a witness of the scene.

MAJONE.

The priest did wisely—

SICARDI.

Yet perchance, my Lord,
Raymond was present at the latest pang;
For oft he would return, and oft retire
Unable to assist the shrieking youth,
Before whose final moment, my quick zeal
Had brought me to your lordship.

MAJONE.

'Tis no matter;
His frequent absence from the dying boy
Will answer my design:—Canst thou not forge
A scroll, short, incoherent, and confused?
Broken by pain, and dictated in death?
Such from the Prince?—but haste, my good Sicardi,
Dispose our sentinel, and meet thy friend
Where more securely we may join our counsels;
And, like the unseen spirits of destruction,
From thickest clouds send forth our secret shafts,
Strike our blind foes, and triumph in their fall.

SCENE II.

RAYMOND, *(entering)*

Amid the tumults of tempestuous life,
Tho' strange events confound the wond'ring mind,
Thou, virtue, art unmoved! How should I joy
To quit this troubled scene, but that thy voice
Forbids the thought, and whispers to my soul
Its task is unperformed! O thou blest spirit!
Thou murdered friend, whose blood is charged on him
Who would have bought thy being with his own!
Support, inspire me, and instruct thy Raymond
How best to satisfy thy injured shade!

(Raymond retires to the farther part of the Stage.)

SCENE III.

VERINO. *(entering)*

Is this a mansion for Verino's son?
And menaced with the rack!—hold, reason, hold!

SCENE IV.

VERINO, RAYMOND,

RAYMOND, *(coming forward.)*

My noble father, welcome to thy son!
Still have I from my earliest years enjoyed

Thy tenderest care, and still my grateful soul
Has sought thy praise, and gloried in thy love.

VERINO.

Thou hast, my Raymond, thou excelling youth!
Joy of thy old fond father! but, alas!
I come not now, as in our happier days,
To pour a warrior's spirit in thy breast,
To fire thy soul, and point the way to fame:
I come, my child, the messenger of horror!

RAYMOND.

O speak, my Lord! whatever fate be mine,
'Twill yet be pleasure to a mind oppressed
To learn that fate from you.

VERINO.

Couldst thou believe,
The King rejects me!— has refused to see
The loyal servant, who, with truth unshaken,
Thro' the long course of no inglorious life,
Has fought his battles, and upheld his power.
He has denied me, what a slave might challenge,
The privilege to speak, and dooms my child
To infamy and torture.

RAYMOND.

Then no more
Must Raymond hope to see his Prince revenged.

VERINO.

I still have friends, have honest valiant friends,
Who yet shall save us from that scene of horror:
The generous spirits, who at my command
Have rushed to conquest, will defend that virtue

Which led them on to glory! They will join
In brave resentment with an injured father.

RAYMOND.

O! let me die in agonies more fierce
Than nature e'er endured, rather than lead
My honored father to forget his duty;
To stain the glories of a life well spent,
And perish in rebellion!

VERINO.

Not preserve thee!
Not save thee from the rack! am I a father?
Can I be deaf to nature, when she bids me
Obey her strongest law, and haste to guard
My darling child from ignominious death?
From that ungrateful, that unworthy King.—

RAYMOND.

He was a father too: and mourns a child,
Whose virtues charmed the world—perhaps already
He has condemned his own too easy faith,
Which wronged your son: ere now perhaps he seeks
To sooth his sorrows with your faithful counsel,
And calls for comfort on his friend Verino!

Enter an OFFICER.

OFFICER.

I have engaged at hazard of my life,
To give this letter to Lord Raymond's hand!

(*Exit.*

VERINO.

What means, my Raymond, this mysterious paper?

RAYMOND *reads*

The King, misguided by thy bitterest foes,
Believes thee guilty; and resolves by torture
To force thee to confession: still they fear,
Lest the wronged army should demand its idol:
Hence 'tis decreed securely in thy prison,
This night to execute their horrid purpose.
If yet thou canst, regard this friendly warning,
And fly to join a numerous band, who wait thee
With anxious ardor, and a fixed resolve
To guard thy life, or perish in thy cause!

VERINO.

Wilt thou not listen to the noble call
Of generous friendship? not attempt to fly
From death, from shame, from torture?

RAYMOND.

No! my Father:
If I must die; I doubt not but hereafter,
Time, who ne'er fails, tho' slow, to draw the veil
From truth's bright image, will inform the world,
And do full justice to my injured honor.

VERINO.

And shall these eyes, that have beheld thy triumphs,
That from thy childhood to this fatal hour
Have gazed with transport on thee, shall they see
Thy graceful form with agony distorted,
And lost in blood and horror?——
Perhaps, my Raymond, when convulsive anguish
Writhes thy torn limbs, and nature sinks beneath it,

Perhaps thy lips may speak—thou knowst not what—

RAYMOND.

If to ourselves our strength be known, my mind
Is proof 'gainst every pang: But thou, my father,
Thou shalt not suffer, not a moment suffer
A fear so deadly to a a heart like thine:
No! take my dagger, and by one kind blow
Anticipate, elude the shameful sentence!
So thou shalt 'scape the horrid scene, whose image
Thus harrows up thy soul; so shall thy son,
Unlike a criminal, and worthy thee,
Yield his last breath with pleasure in thy sight,
And bless the hand, that saves him from disgrace.

VERINO.

By Heaven 'tis well:—thy spirit has awaked
New powers within my soul: Yes! noble youth!
Since cruel destiny alike denies thee
To live with honor, or with brave revenge
To fall, as suits a soldier, in the field,
I will defeat the malice of our foes;
I will, tho' nature shudders at the thought,
I will preserve thee from——

RAYMOND.

Behold my breast.

VERINO.

And can this arm, that in thy tender years
So oft, with exquisite delight has borne thee,
Proud of its little charge—can it forget,
That heaven ordained it to protect thy being,
Not shed thy blood!—what would thy mother say,
Had death not saved her from this dreadful hour?

RAYMOND.

O she could never, never poorly wish
Her son should linger out a few sad moments
To die dishonoured.

VERINO.

No! thou shalt not be so—
Be firm my heart! be firm!

RAYMOND.

Strike! strike, my Father!

VERINO.

'Tis but a blow, and thou art placed beyond
The grasp of power!

RAYMOND.

Complete thy generous purpose!

VERINO.

I will, I will——O Heaven! and has the grave—
Stay, blessed spirit!——yet a moment stay!—
Gone! Vanished!—O!—

RAYMOND.

What would my father? speak!
Whence is this wild amazement in thine eyes!
This perturbation!—

VERINO.

Sawst thou not thy mother?
Her troubled spirit shot in anger by!

RAYMOND.

Believe me, sir, 'tis idle mockery all!

The mere creation of a mind disordered!

VERINO.

It may, it must be so:—but the sad image
Has withered all my little strength:—This hand,
This faltering hand, as soon could force a passage
To the dark centre of the earth—as wound
The bosom of my child.

RAYMOND.

Then let me aid
That failing arm, unequal to thy soul;
Give me the dagger!

VERINO.

Though my heart be frozen,
I will deliver thee. Not shed thy blood,
I cannot that—nor see my slaughtered boy
Expiring at my feet: yet I will free thee—
A friendly poison—aye—without a pang!

RAYMOND.

I will receive it as the dearest gift
Of a kind father's love.

VERINO.

Farewell! farewell!
No racks—no tortures—no disgraceful death——
No—our inhuman foes—they shall not triumph——
Pride of my soul! they shall not—no my child,
I fly to set thee free—Farewell for ever.

(Exit.

SCENE V.

RAYMOND, *alone.*

Yes! thou sure end of sorrow! friendly refuge
From persecution, tyranny, and pain!
I will embrace thee, death! will eager rush
To thy protecting shade, since hope no more
Can give to fading life those flattering colours,
Which please, tho' false, and cheat us into joy.
My dreams are vanished, my delusive dreams
Of future years! all pregnant with delight,
And sweet connubial love! for I must leave thee,
Leave thee defenceless in this world of trouble,
Thou lovely partner of my faithful heart!
Yet ere my lingering soul is severed from thee,
I fain would press thee with a dying hand,
Leave on thy lips one parting kiss, and yield
My latest breath in fervent prayers, that Heaven
May sooth the sufferings of my loved Eudora.

SCENE VI.

RAYMOND, EUDORA.

EUDORA, *entering.*

My Lord! my husband! take me to thy arms,
And let us part no more! but let me still
Thro' every fortune be thy dear companion!
Now, as I entered here, I thought I heard,
Or love deceived me with a fancied sound,
Thy lips pronounce my name.

RAYMOND.

Thou heardst aright,
Thou, ever present to my constant mind!
Tho' deepest horrors, shame, and death, and anguish
Press me on every side, still is thy image
First in my thoughts, and nearest to my soul.
I wish to tell thee,—but, by Heaven, I cannot—
How shall I teach my tongue to wound thine ear
With such a tale?

EUDORA.

What! has infernal falsehood
Reached thy dear life?

RAYMOND.

Thy fears too well inform thee:
Yes! I must die—if, ye almighty powers,
If ye regard the prayer, the righteous prayer
Of innocence oppressed, O hear me now!
For every ill which you have heaped on me,
Pour down a blessing on this beauteous head,
Let not affliction—

EUDORA.

Think, yet think my Lord,
Canst thou not 'scape from these detested walls?
Canst thou not fly unseen? O I will follow thee
Thro' every peril, to the utmost verge
Of this wide earth; to some far happier clime,
Unstained by falsehood, and to guilt unknown.

RAYMOND.

Vain is thy matchless tenderness and love:
O! I must tell thee all—my open soul

Can never hide a single thought from thee,
But summon all thy fortitude, I pray thee,
And hear it like thyself! E'en now, my father
Distracted told me, that the king misled,
Dooms me to death—'tis said, that in my prison
This night, the rack—

EUDORA.

O tyranny accurst!
Distraction! horror! what thy limbs be torn!
Thou, thou endure the torture!

RAYMOND.

Never, never!
Banish the dreadful image from thy fancy.
We are prepared against it.

EUDORA.

Tell me Raymond!

A SERVANT, *entering*.

My Lord Verino sends——

RAYMOND.

Enough! my friend,
I know thy message: give me what thou bring'st,
And say in answer to my noble father,
I bless him for a thousand proofs of kindness,
But chiefly for the last.

(Exit Servant.

EUDORA.

O speak, my Raymond,

Explain these horrid mysteries, while yet
My reason holds, and I have sense to hear thee!

RAYMOND.

Compose this wild emotion of thy soul!
Thou shalt not see me sunk to the condition
Of vilest criminals, and made a prey
To the stern ministers of blood and torture:
My father's love has armed me well against them;
I wait, Eudora, but to take a long,
A last farewell of thee, and then my soul,
Enfranchised by this friendly drug, shall soar
Beyond oppression, and elude its power.

EUDORA.

Must thou destroy thyself? think what it is
To die unbidden! to throw off obedience,
And in defiance of divine command,
Rush to the presence of offended Heaven!
Thus humbly on my knees let me entreat thee
To weigh the rash design!

RAYMOND.

Can my Eudora
Be thus unmindful of her husband's honor?
Can she, with tears, entreat him to preserve
A few sad moments of precarious life
To die disgraced, in agony and shame!

EUDORA.

O witness, Heaven! that I have ever prized
Thy honor as thy life!—they both may yet

RAYMOND.

Thy grief, my love, o'erwhelms thy troubled reason:

Life stands no longer in thy husband's choice;
I die to shun dishonorable death;
The rack's prepared—no power—

EUDORA.

Yes, Raymond, yes!
There is a power: that all-protecting hand,
Which oft has saved thee in the rage of battle,
And turned the uplifted falchion from thy head,
May still preserve thee. I conjure thee, do not
Resign that hope! do not, by blindly yielding
To fierce despair, distract thy wretched wife,
Forsake thy children; and distrust thy God!

RAYMOND.

I must not hear thee, for thy pleasing voice
Has known so long the passage to my soul,
That it may steal on my unguarded reason,
And lead me to forget the call of honor,
The expectations of a generous father.
He saw me doomed to infamy and torture,
And sends me freedom; shall he hear that I,
In weak compliance with a woman's tears,
Dare not embrace the remedy he gives?
Shall he despise me for an abject coward?
Despise the son, whom yet he fondly thinks
Firm like himself, and resolutely brave!

EUDORA.

O Raymond, say! what is it to be brave?
'Tis, to maintain the glorious cause of truth;
To fear not man; but, strong in conscious virtue,
And the protection of approving Heaven,
To stand unshaken in the sternest hour
That puts to proof the temper of his soul.

RAYMOND.

By Heaven, thy words have changed my every sense,
And thou appearst to my enlightened eyes
A guardian angel, speaking with a voice
Of eloquence divine; inspired by thee,
And surely thou art virtue's self, my soul
Shall quit its hasty purpose—Thou hast armed me
With nobler courage—I can now despise,
And calmly meet the terrors of my fate.

EUDORA.

O blessed change! illusion now has left
Thy noble mind; thou art thyself again:
Some Heavenly spirit checks my rising fears,
And whispers to me, we shall yet be happy:
But let me haste, nor lose these precious moments;
I'll force admittance to our royal master,
Will set thy innocence, thy worth before him,
And visit thee again with life and honor!

Exit Eudora.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—THE PALACE.

MAJONE, *(alone.)*

The King will soon regard this awful paper,
(Thanks to the cunning of Sicardi's hand!)
As the last prayer of his expiring son,
And Raymond dies; my hated rival, dies,
And falling, leaves my path to sovereign power
Free from its worst impediment.

SCENE II.

MAJONE, SICARDI.

SICARDI, *(entering hastily.)*

My Lord!
I bring you tidings, that surpass the reach

Of warmest expectation. Blind Verino,
Wild with despair, and dread of public shame,
To save his son from a disgraceful death,
Has given him poison.

MAJONE.

By our hopes 'tis great:
Fate seems to labor to fulfil my wishes,
And when in thought I seal my rival's death,
To aid my great designs, obedient nature
Cancels her strongest law, and arms for me
A father's hasty hand to kill his child;
On him then be the blood! But say! did Raymond
Yield such exact obedience to Verino
As not to hesitate?

SICARDI.

That is, my Lord,
What I am yet to learn: the trusty spy,
Whom I had stationed to observe their purpose,
Heard long discourse, but soon as he informed me
Of this its desperate issue, I in haste
Flew to apprise you of this great event,
Ere you could shew that paper to the King,
Which now 'tis better to conceal.

MAJONE.

'Tis true:
Ere Raymond's death be known, I will appear,
His warmest advocate; so shall I keep
The secret motions of my heart disguised,
And 'scape that vengeance, which I else might fear
From those, who may lament him.

SICARDI.

Hark! my Lord,

A sound of tumult!

GUARDS, *(behind the scene)*

No! you must not pass.

EUDORA, *(behind the scene.)*

Do not forbid affliction to appear
Where justice dwells!

MAJONE.

It is Eudora's voice:
She comes, unknowing of her husband's fate,
To supplicate the King: I could not wish
A better witness of the zeal I mean
To shew for Raymond's life: retire my friend,
And keep a watchful eye upon Verino.

(Exit Sicardi.

SCENE III.

MAJONE, EUDORA *entering with* LELIO, *and* OTHER ATTENDANTS.

EUDORA.

How hard the heart of that unfeeling wretch,
Who strives to banish from the ear of power
The plaintive cries of innocence oppressed!

MAJONE.

Tis not in cruelty itself to bar

Eudora's passage: Beauty of such lustre
Shining thro' tears, and lovely in affliction,
Might force obedience from a ruthless savage.
The King, whose presence I am here expecting,
Will surely yield to your resistless prayers,
And clear the honor of your injured Lord.
But see! our Sovereign comes!

SCENE IV.

THE KING, MAJONÈ, EUDORA, LELIO, *and* OTHER ATTENDANTS.

THE KING, *(entering.)*

Eudora here!

EUDORA.

O do not turn, my gracious liege, from her
Who once was happy in your royal favor!
I come, an humble suppliant, to implore
The blessed spirit of impartial justice,
Whose throne is in the bosom of my King.

THE KING.

I grieve to find my sorrows must receive
Increase from thine; full well Eudora knows
That I have looked on her as on my daughter;
That I was fondly pleased to see her wedded
To an aspiring youth, whom once I thought
Surpassing all in loyalty and honor.

EUDORA.

O think so still! believe me, while I swear
By Heaven's all-seeing power, that not a thought
Of base ingratitude, or blind ambition,
Has stained the virtues, which you once admired;
That Raymond bears, thus injured as he is,
A mind as spotless, and a heart as loyal,
As Sicily can boast.

THE KING.

I am persuaded
Thou think'st so of him, and I would to Heaven
That thou wert not deceived!

EUDORA.

Am I deceived?
Do I not know myself? for O my liege,
Our souls are one, and not a thought e'er rose
In Raymond's mind, which was not known to me.

THE KING.

Thou dost not know the frenzy of ambition.

EUDORA.

O! if my King suspects, that thirst of empire
Can taint a mind, which never sought distinction,
Save what arises from superior virtue,
Banish my Raymond! let us fly together
To some lone spot, some unfrequented wild!
There, like the first inhabitants of earth,
We may securely live, in that sweet peace,
Which ever dwells with innocence and truth.

THE KING.

My mournful soul, tho' loaded with affliction,

Felt every pang redoubled, when I heard
That two, who followed Raymond, have confirmed
The charge against him, and proclaim their lord
The murderer of my son!

EUDORA.

Can there be wretches
So deeply tainted with ungrateful falsehood?
Monsters of perfidy!——as worthy credence
As the base atheist, who denies his maker!

MAJONE.

These slaves may be suborned by envious malice.

EUDORA.

Can the bold falsehood of unblushing traitors,
Can oaths, like theirs, confound the voice of truth,
And in the bosom of a King outweigh
The nobler witness of a soul well tried,
Untainted honor, and a life of glory?
O hapless virtue! where art thou secure,
When man is partial to each foe of thine,
And quick to credit every monstrous tale,
Which art can frame, and villany suggest?

THE KING.

Thou wrong'st me much: but I forgive, and love
Thy generous warmth: yet know me for thy friend!
By Heaven I swear, that wretched as I am,
'Twould give me truest joy, to see thy Raymond
Clear every doubt, and rise again to fame.

EUDORA.

Eternal blessings on the noble mind,
Which forms that virtuous wish!—Beware my liege!

Beware of treacherous art! nor think I plead
For Raymond's life alone! I plead for you:
For think! O think what agonies of soul
Must rend your bosom, if, by fraud misled,
You doom my Lord to death, and find too late,
That you have slaughtered, as your son's assassin,
The gallant soldier, who preserved that son,
The man who honored, and the friend who loved him!
O think of this! and grant me one request!
That on the cunning semblances of guilt,
Which frontless perjury may cast on Raymond,
You will not hastily decide, but swear,
For the small space of only three short months,
To hold his life as sacred!

MAJONE.

Let Majone
Join in this just request! I dare affirm,
At hazard of my life, that Raymond bears
A heart too noble, and too firm a spirit
To wrong his sovereign by a timorous flight.

EUDORA.

Generous Majone! may that power reward thee,
Who pours his blessings on the sons of pity!

THE KING.

Yes! my Eudora, thy request is granted:
But, till the time, thou pray'st for, is expired,
See me no more! I would be left to dwell
In silent sorrow on the loved idea
Of my unhappy child. I must retire,
And try to reconcile my tortured mind
To Heaven's most dreadful sentence; oh farewell!

And be thy virtuous wishes crowned with peace!

(Exit the King.

SCENE V.

MAJONE, EUDORA, LELIO, *and* ATTENDANTS,

EUDORA.

Good Angels visit thee with Heavenly comfort!
Thou faithful Lelio! seek my Lord Verino!
Raise him to happier thoughts, and bid him haste
To shed the tears of joy on Raymond's breast,
In thankful adoration of that power,
Which has preserved us from impending horror;

(Exit Lelio.

Which gives us now to think, our youthful hero
Will rise superior to the wounds of slander,
And run with glory, the full course of life!

(Exit with her attendants.

SCENE VI.

MAJONE, *(alone.)*

Hence! and indulge, deluded as thou art,
Thy momentary triumph! on thy steps

The powerful genius of Majone waits,
To pay me amply for thy transient pleasure,
And for the lively beams of flattering hope,
To pour the darkness of despair upon thee!

SCENE VII.

To MAJONE, *enter* SICARDI.

MAJONE.

Whence, my Sicardi, this disordered haste?

SICARDI.

Alas! my lord, our better plans are blasted:
Raymond still lives: Eudora's piety,
With fond entreaties, and prevailing tears,
Awaked him from despair; taught him to scorn
The desperate remedy of self-destruction,
And trust his being to the power who gave it.

MAJONE.

Curse on her saintly pride! it ever springs
To thwart my great designs: but 'twill not be;
The glorious aim of spirits like to mine
Is not defeated by a doleful prayer—
This paper still shall urge the troubled King
To break his promise, and the very suit,
In which I lent my voice, to aid Eudora,
Shall, as my instrument of vengeance, serve
To hasten Raymond's death.—But say my friend,
What learn you of Verino?

SICARDI.

Now retired,
He broods in silence o'er his violent deed,
As yet unknowing that Eudora's tears
Prevailed on Raymond to neglect his present,
He thinks him poisoned.

MAJONE.

Let him think so still!
It shall be now my first, my greatest care
To keep him thus deceived—hence may arise
Most glorious mischief, and of this at least
We shall be sure, that while Verino thus
Laments the fancied murder of his son,
He cannot mar the arts, I now must use
To ruin Raymond with the King.—But time
Calls us my friend to seize the golden minute,
Which hastes to crown us with our great reward!

(Exeunt.

SCENE VIII.

AN APARTMENT IN VERINO'S HOUSE.

VERINO, *alone.*

What art thou now, my child? thy gentle spirit
Is fled——ah whither fled?——
Mysterious, unknown terrors crowd upon me—
This trembling withered body would impart

Its weakness to my soul; but thou support me!
Thou! who, delivered from this treacherous world,
Art free to range with spirits like thyself!
Now, thou blest being! now assist thy father,
Who fondly conscious of thy spotless virtue,
Racked his own heart, and strained the powers of nature
To save that virtue from accurst oppression!
Teach me to find thee thro' those dreary paths,
That mock the searches of inquiring man!
Look down, my Raymond while——

SCENE IX.

VERINO, *enter* LELIO.

VERINO.

Ah! what art thou,
Who dar'st, in scorn of my express command,
To break upon my privacy? Begone!

LELIO.

My gracious Lord, the tidings that I bear
Will plead in my excuse.

VERINO.

Ah! thou art come
But to repeat a melancholy tale,
I know too well: yet say! didst thou behold

That injured spirit take its joyful flight
From this accursed earth?

LELIO.

Your words my Lord
Amaze and terrify.——

VERINO.

Dost thou not bring
A last farewell from my expiring son
To his fond father? Speak!

LELIO.

My gracious Lord,
I have not seen Lord Raymond; but I come
With joy to tell you, that your dear Eudora
Has taught our royal master to respect
His injured virtue, and almost restore him
To full possession of suspended honor;
Then fear not for his life!

VERINO.

Slave! wouldst thou mock me?
But I perceive thee villain! thou art sent
By some insidious foe to rack my brain,
And torture me to madness!

LELIO.

Can my Lord
Suspect that faith, he has so oft acknowledged?
By many years of duty well approved,
By the loved virtues of your son I swear,
I heard, and heard with joy unspeakable,
Our generous sovereign pledge his royal word

To your dear daughter, that he yet would hold
Lord Raymond's life as sacred as his own.

VERINO.

Then am I curst beyond the reach of Heaven.
My son! my innocent, my murdered son!
Oh! I have plunged into a gulf of horror,
Whence not the mercy of a pitying God
Could snatch my sinking soul! O Raymond! Raymond!

(Falls into the arms of Lelio.

LELIO.

What means this dreadful agony, which thus
Shakes his enfeebled age? I fear the shock
Of his son's late dishonor has o'erwhelmed
His troubled reason. But reviving strength
Dawns in his face. How fares my worthy lord?

VERINO, *(recovering)*

My faithful Lelio! ah!

LELIO.

Let me support
Your faltering steps, and guide them to your son,
Who free from danger, and restored to fame,
Wants but your presence to complete his triumph.

VERINO.

I have no son: why, Heaven? why had I ever!
Haste, haste to fly me, nor disgrace thyself
By shameful kindness to a wretch, whose pride
Has burst the bonds of nature, and destroyed

The worthiest son, that ever blest a father!
I, I have murdered Raymond!

LELIO.

Heaven forbid!

VERINO.

Yet he may live—some blessed chance may yet
Keep my infernal present from his lips:
Ah no, false flattering hope!——He never knew
His father form a wish, how wild soever,
But with the fervor of a fond obedience
He hasted to fulfil it: and that father,
That honored, much-loved father in return
Has murdered him!

LELIO.

If there is room to doubt,
Still think the watchful and o'er-ruling power,
Which guards the virtuous, has preserved your son;
Still hope my lord!

VERINO.

Oh blessed heavenly sound!
Yes I will hope;—But let us fly to clear
The dreadful doubt!—now mercy! mercy Heaven!

SCENE X.

MAJONE, VERINO, LELIO.

VERINO, *as he is going out, meets Majone.*

O say, my friend, canst thou inform me aught

Concerning Raymond ?

MAJONE.

Would to Heaven I had not
So sad a tale of misery to tell !

VERINO.

O ! lost again ! beyond recovery lost!

MAJONE.

Ill fated youth! now when thy King resolved
To shield thy valor from the shafts of envy !
How hard to perish by a base assassin !
Curse on the envious wretch, the hellish fiend,
Who robbed the world of thy unequalled virtue.

VERINO.

Curse on for ever ! search thro' earth and hell
For curses never merited till now !
And pour them all on this devoted head !
I am that wretch ! I am that hellish fiend!
I murdered Raymond, I destroyed my son——

MAJONE, *aside.*

Blind credulous fool ! I leave thee to thy frenzy.
Since I have nothing now to dread from thee,
I haste secure to end the mighty work
Of vengeance and ambition !

(Exit Majone.

SCENE XI.

VERINO, LELIO.

VERINO.

Earth gape wide!
And instant hide me——

LELIO.

O! my wretched Lord!

VERINO.

To kill a child so loving, and so loved!——
Nor earth, nor air, nor the dark sea contain,
A monster so abhorred.—

LELIO.

O grant him patience!

VERINO. *(distracted)*

Hark! hark! a voice! it is my Raymond speaks!
See! to a synod of enquiring angels
He tells the dreadful tale:—they stand aghast:
They call for vengeance equal to the crime:
But see! he pleads, my generous child! for me:
He pleads for mercy on the hand, that slew him,
The murdering father!

LELIO.

My good lord retire!

VERINO.

No! no! it must not be—Vengeance divine
Denies the suit—Hark! how she calls Verino!
See! see! she beckons—let her victim go!
I own her justice; and I haste to meet it.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—THE PALACE.

THE KING, MAJONE, OFFICERS, &c.

MAJONE.

'Tis unexampled treachery; beyond
The reach of thought! my foolish easy nature
With false compassion pleaded for his life;
Joined in Eudora's suit; nor would believe
Strong proofs of guilt: but these heart-piercing words,
These sacred orders of my dying prince
Strike full conviction on my soul!—I fly
To see his murderer pay blood for blood
With ample retribution.

Returns triumphant from the vanquished Moors—
See! see! he comes——
Twelve Moorish Princes drag his golden car,
And crouch beneath his frown!
But see! behold a hellish fiend, whose breath
Would blast the brightness of the mid-day sun
Has seized him in his course: ah me! she tears
His laurel crown, and in its place inscribes
Infernal characters; see! round his brow,
Whence beamed the radiance of a God, she spreads
A hideous gloom, and brooding in the midst
Sits haggard Shame:—avaunt detested slander!

THE KING.

Alas! the fate of his unworthy son
O'erwhelms his mind, and drowns in deepest horror
His nobler faculties.

VERINO.

Will you believe it?
Will you, ungrateful, credit such a tale?
Is that a countenance of guilt? that face
Where honor sits enthroned! where from the dawn
Of earliest youth each opening virtue bloomed!
Ah me! they hear me not—Ingratitude
Has steeled their hearts; they have forgotten all
My boy's exploits, the glories of his youth:
Slander has cancelled all, and see they send
Their brave deliverer to a dungeon's gloom,
To die disgraced, to perish like a robber!

THE KING.

This piteous spectacle will rend my heart:
I cannot bear his wretchedness: Majone,
Try thou to sooth him—and with mild persuasion

To lead him hence!

MAJONE, *to* VERINO.

Come my good lord, be comforted!
Compose your spirits—all will yet be well!
Let me attend you to——

VERINO.

No! Raymond, no!
Thou shalt not to the rack! should we endure it,
Oh should I suffer thee, my son, to finish
Thy days of glory, by a death so vile,
The gallant soldiers, our great ancestors,
E'en in their very graves would shake with horror:
And their pure spirits in the realms of bliss,
Would scorn to join in fellowship with ours,
Nor own us for their line—it shall not be!
I will preserve thee yet—still in my bosom
I wear a faithful guard against dishonor:
'Tis but a blow—I've struck it—thou art free!

(Wounds Majone and exit.

SCENE III.

THE KING, MAJONE.

THE KING.

O fatal deed! the blindness of his frenzy
Has murdered good Majone:

MAJONE.

No! my liege!
Thanks to my better stars! I yet am safe:
The guardian swiftness of my ready hand
Turning his dagger's point, has made its wound
Most trivial.

THE KING.

Blessed chance!

MAJONE.

My gracious master!
I tremble still to think your sacred life
Stood in his frenzy's reach. Our love and duty
To you, and to the state enjoins us all
To press for Raymond's death, and the confinement
Of this old maniac, whose distempered mind
May spread sedition.

THE KING.

Thou say'st true Majone.
See him safe lodged under some gentle guard,
And swiftly bid the stroke of justice fall
Upon his guilty son! I shall not rest
Till thou return'st with tidings, that his blood
Has flowed in just atonement to thy prince.

(Exit with Officers, &c.

SCENE IV.

MAJONE, *(alone.)*

My proudest hopes are realized, and sovereignty

Appears already mine:

To MAJONE, *enter* SICARDI.

What now Sicardi?

SICARDI.

My prosperous lord our provident Uberto
Anxious to aid us with the giddy rabble,
And hurry Raymond's fate, has reached the city.——
Before a litter with the prince's body,
Bare-headed, and denouncing heavenly vengeance
On all we hate, he fires the gathering croud,
And guides the maddening tumult to our wishes.

MAJONE.

Excellent priest! His presence will prevent
What most I feared, the rescue of our foe;
Haste, and direct his holy voice to pour
Its potent thunders round the important spot,
Where Raymond at this moment is led forth
To public death. Expect me in that scene!
There the rich banquet of revenge awaits us!

(Exeunt.

SCENE V.

RAYMOND *and* EUDORA, WITH GUARDS, &c.

Dead March.

RAYMOND.

Take this last kiss!—yet once more let me bless thee!

And now farewell! O haste my love to leave me!
And hide thy killing softness from my sight!
'Tis there I feel the anguish of my fate.

EUDORA.

No! no! thou dear supporter of my being,
I cannot, must not leave thee.

RAYMOND.

Spare thine eyes
This horrid scene of blood!

EUDORA.

'Tis not in absence
To save me from the sight—these wretched eyes
Will see thee ever—till they close in death
Still must they have thy mangled form before them.

OFFICER.

My lord you must prepare.

EUDORA.

Bind! bind these arms!
If he is guilty I am guilty too;
And beg to perish with him.

RAYMOND.

O! my love!
Collect thy noble fortitude! and raise
Thy drooping soul to better thoughts! remember
Thy virtue taught my mind a due submission
To Heaven's high will, and saved my hands from guilt:
Thou my angelic monitor prepared'st
My soul for future bliss, and O if ever
Departed beings may to earth repair,

Still as thy guardian will I hover round thee:
And here my latest breath shall beg of Heaven
To give thee peace, and heal thy wounded spirit.

EUDORA.

Pray not to Heaven to punish me with life
When thou art severed from me!

OFFICER.

Good my lord,
Excuse me! but fresh orders are arrived,
That claim my prompt obedience.

RAYMOND.

Friend, forgive me!
I will but fold her once more to my heart:
To quit this bosom is indeed to burst
My strings of life: The rest is but a form,
That will be briefly past—nor feared, nor felt.

EUDORA.

Judge of the world! desert not innocence!
Yet save him—yet preserve——

A loud Shout is heard,

AND A VOICE BEHIND THE SCENES EXCLAIMS

He shall not die,
The blood of Raymond shall not stain our city.

The Shouts are redoubled.

EUDORA.

Transporting sounds! ye just, ye generous people!
Ye will restore him yet to life and glory!

The tumultuous clamour encreases,

ANOTHER VOICE BEHIND THE SCENE EXCLAIMS

Let Raymond die! 'tis Heaven demands his blood!
Perish the base assassin of his prince!

SCENE VI.

RAYMOND, EUDORA, GUARDS, &c.

Uberto enters before the litter, with the body of the Prince.

Dirge.

Your pæans change to plaintive cries,
Mingled with sorrow's silent shower!
In death's dark shade the hero lies,
By treason slain in glory's hour!

Re-echoed thro' the troubled air
From victory's voice the dirge shall flow
And transport turning to despair,
Shall deeply sound a nation's woe!

Dear murder'd victor! at thy doom
Valour must pour affliction's flood,
And justice mourning o'er thy tomb,
Appease thy shade with tears of blood!

UBERTO.

Why sleeps the sword of justice? Heaven has sent me
Loudly to call it into instant action.
In me Sicilians, in my faithful voice
You hear your murdered prince. This sacred corse
Speaks thro' my organs and demands revenge.

THE GUARDS SEIZE RAYMOND.

EUDORA.

Hold yet a moment in the name of Heaven!
I feel inspired, for Truth and Equity
Two seraphs on my side sustain my soul
And with their searching spirit, bid me question
This recreant man of God, whose treacherous tongue
Turned agent to the fiend of murderous slander.

UBERTO, *(aside.)*

Curse on this penetrating woman's voice!
It pierces thro' my heart; she must be silenced
Or we are lost indeed. Good citizens!
Who pity female wretchedness, convey,
This lady, frantic from her husband's crimes,
Safe to some quiet scene.

EUDORA.

Arch hypocrite!

'Tis not a frantic woman, whom thou hear'st;
It is thy warning genius speaks in me,
And bids thee not in thy career of guilt,
Pass on, beyond those barriers of perdition,
Which, if they close on thy encumbered soul,
The arm of heavenly mercy may not open.

UBERTO.

Away with her! my friends! away with her!
Some heavenly visitation would lay waste
Your populous city, could Palermo suffer
The church's holy sons to be insulted,
By the wild ravings of a troubled woman:

EUDORA.

Unhand me villains! if the living lose
All sense of right, the dead may be my friend;
O that in thee thou precious sacred corse!
The honest blood (they say such things have been)
Might at the touch of the concealed assassin,
Gush, and proclaim the real man of guilt.
This may not be—Yet will I fondly clasp
Thy clay cold hand, and gaze upon thy features,
Whence comfort used to beam on all the afflicted

(Uncovers the face of the Prince.

Benignant still in death!

UBERTO, *(aside)*

Wretch that I am,
This pallid form appals me.

EUDORA.

I implore
The spirit from its seat of heavenly radiance,
To dart one beam of doubt-dispelling light,

And in this dreadful crisis here decide
'Twixt truth and falsehood calling both on thee.
But is thy spirit fled——

UBERTO.

O could I here discover
The slightest symptom of suspended life,
Thou wert indeed an angel of redemption!
No! there is none!——
Heaven prompts thee not to cancel, but to punish
Repented guilt. Thy words are brands of fire
Hell is already in the murderer's breast—
These torments tell thee I am he—Majone——
Majone's curst ambition was the tempter——
Release Lord Raymond, from his guiltless blood,
Still let me save my over-burdened soul!

EUDORA.

O blessed moment! merciful detection!
My heaven-protected lord!

RAYMOND.

My guardian angel!

UBERTO.

Seize me, ye ready ministers of justice!
Nothing can slake the flames around my soul,
But bathing in my own detested blood!

EUDORA.

Unhappy man be calm.

UBERTO.

Thou blest inquisitor, whom heaven inspires,
Fly, and reveal to the deluded king

Thy Raymond's innocence, Majone's crimes,
And my remorse, my anguish, my despair

EUDORA.

I go, and will entreat him to suspend
The doom, thou call'st for, and allow thee time,
To make, if possible, thy peace with heaven!

(Exit.

SCENE VII.

RAYMOND, UBERTO, GUARDS, &c.

RAYMOND, *(advancing to the litter.)*

Friend of my heart, how does thy gentle nature
Reign in thy visage, still unmarred by death!

UBERTO.

O were there aught of life—
No, 'tis too late!—He's in the grasp of death,
And I in torture—bear him to the palace!
Thither, ye men of justice, follow me,
I am your willing, your determined victim!

(Exeunt.

SCENE VIII.

The Scene changes.

Enter VERINO, *attended by* LELIO.

VERINO,

Old foolish eyes! will you not cease to pour?
These unavailing streams! not all the tears
That penitence has shed, since crimes began,
Can make atonement for such guilt, or wash
My child's blood, from my hand.

LELIO.

Be comforted!

VERINO.

Talk not of comfort! hence and teach the world
To hate my name, and tremble at my crimes,
For it shall feel their weight! my monstrous deed
Will fright domestic happiness from earth,
With filial love—The son no more shall live
In sweet dependance on a father's care,
But fear to meet a dagger from that arm
Whose every sinew should be strained to——Hark!
What cries of vengeance! 'Tis the righteous people
They come to tear me piece-meal:—bid them plunge
In some infuriate whirlpool of the deep
This savage heart, not worthy to find rest,
In earth's parental bosom.

SCENE IX.

VERINO, LELIO, OFFICER.

OFFICER (*entering with a drawn sword.*)

Noble veteran!
The wretches, who have toil'd to crush thy house,
Have hurried quick perdition on themselves;
The generous people, raging for thy wrongs,
And now apprized of all Majone's crimes,
With a precipitate justice have destroyed
Him, and his creature, the corrupt Sicardi!

VERINO.

There's comfort yet—the hero's slanderers
Can stab his fame no more—lend me thy weapon!
When his assassin, whom thou know'st not, soldier
Has at the stroke of retribution yielded
His forfeit life to this thy honest sword—
We still in happier worlds—

EUDORA, (*Entering behind him and snatching the sword as he attempts to destroy himself*

Forbear! forbear!
Thou tender father! blest be heaven! I save thee!
For O! I come to banish thy deep anguish,
And raise thee up to joy!

VERINO.

My daughter! O!

Speak not of joy, Eudora to a wretch,
Weighed down with guilt! nor wear that kind concern!
No! no! my daughter! take a different form!
Come like the angel of eternal wrath,
Arrayed in terrors from avenging heaven!
And with a voice, whose horror-striking sound
May penetrate the earth, demand thy husband!
Thy murder'd Raymond! bid the guilty father
Restore the son he slew!

EUDORA,

Alas! my Lord!
A fatal error clouds your troubled sense
My Raymond lives—

VERINO.

My poor deluded daughter!
He might have lived; long years with glory lived;
Nor envy, fraud, nor slander could oppress
His stronger innocence, but O Eudora!
There is, there is, my child, a curst assassin,
Whose base unnatural heart—

EUDORA.

Soon undeceived,
Again my father shall embrace his Raymond:
He comes to say how providence has saved
The son so worthy of his glorious sire;
See, my dear Lord, he comes!

SCENE X.

VERINO, EUDORA, LELIO, RAYMOND, &c.

VERINO.

It is good heaven!
It is his form: O mock me not!

RAYMOND, *(entering)*

My father—

VERINO.

He speaks! he lives! I have not killed my child.

RAYMOND.

My honored father! yes! thy son yet lives,
To heal thy wounded heart and bless thy age

VERINO.

Witness ye spirits! friends to human kind!
Witness the father has not slain his son!
What miracle preserved thy precious life
From my despair, my guilt?

RAYMOND.

Behold my Lord:
Behold the dear preserver of your son!
'Twas this celestial monitor, inspired
By pitying heaven, who taught me to defy
Impending torture with superior courage.

VERINO.

Angel of safety, let me fold thee close,
Close to my panting heart! O I will sit,
Whole days to hear of thy amazing worth,
And bless thee o'er and o'er! but say my son
Has Heaven revealed the murderers of the prince?

RAYMOND.

Revealed and punished—but the King expects us,
His noble heart finds generous consolation
Under the bitter loss, which justly claims
Our deepest sympathy, in blessing Heaven
That saved him from the horror of destroying
The prince's bosom friend, for his assassin!

VERINO.

Away then to the palace! the old fathers
Shall mingle tears of blended grief and joy;
Nor will we e'er forget, thou lovely angel!
All that we owe to thee; thy fortitude
Shall be our daily theme!

EUDORA.

O! may the mercy
So signalized on us, when hope seemed lost,
Restrain the wild precipitance of man
In hours of misery, and through the world
Teach patient virtue, to confide in Heaven!

THE VICEROY:

A TRAGEDY.

Ερωτες υπερ μεν αγαν
Ελθοντες, ουκ ευδοξιαν
Ουδ' αρεταν παρεδωκαν
Ανδρασιν. ει δ' αλις ελθοι
Κυπρις, ουκ αλλα θεος
Ευχαρις ουτω—

Euripides—Medea 627.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.



JUAN DE CASTRO, *Viceroy of the Indies.*
GARCIA, *his Friend.*
SYLVEYRA, *the Son of Constantia.*
MOLINA.
CARASCO.
PERSOD, *an aged Bramin.*

CONSTANTIA DE SYLVEYRA, *Mother of the Young Officer who bears that name.*
VELORA, *the Bramin's Daughter.*
PANEEA, *an Indian attendant.*

Portugueze Guards, &c.

SCENE—THE CITY OF GOA.

THE VICEROY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

VELORA,

Discovered in an Indian dress and a pensive attitude, with a book: after a short pause.

Thou mild divinity! persuasive power!
Thou guide and glory of our Christian rulers!
Protect thy secret votary! I read
Thy clear unquestioned truth, thy matchless mercy
In all my fate, and in the heavenly mind
Of my brave guardian, my beloved Sylveyra:
Yet pardon me, thou pure, indulgent power!
That still to India's unenlightened worship
I pay a forced observance! O forgive
This filial heart, whose only fallacy
Aims to ensure an aged father's peace.

SCENE II.

CONSTANTIA, VELORA.

CONSTANTIA, *(entering.)*

Still at thy orisons! my dear Velora;
Good angels waft thy every vow to Heaven,
And plead for purity so like their own!

VELORA.

Then will they teach me to repay your kindness,
And all the bounty of your generous son,
Which soothed my woes, and makes captivity,
Beneath your provident parental care,
More sweet than freedom.

CONSTANTIA.

In thy glowing heart,
My lovely Indian, like thy genial clime,
Rich nature reigns; thy gratitude o'er-rates
Compassion's casual services.

VELORA.

Your pardon!
To rate them justly is my reason's pride:
Hence memory paints them in her strongest colours:
I see the furious sons of Portugal,
Roused to fierce anger on Cambaya's shore
By Moorish fraud, and our perfidious king;
I see them, bursting like a flood of fire

Athwart our peaceful grove, where fixt we listened
To the mild precepts of our aged sire:
The ruffian soldiers in his hoary locks
Twist their fell hands; and with uplifted falchions
Demand his hidden treasure.

CONSTANTIA.

What a scene
For thy soft filial heart!

VELORA.

The holy Bramin
Pleads only for his child:—the furious robbers
Tear from my neck the strings of precious pearl,
Threatening worse violence:—but swift to save us
The blest Sylveyra comes.

CONSTANTIA.

'Twas Heaven, that sent him
In pity to thy virtues.

VELORA.

His bright eye
Flashes rebuke; and at his awful mandate
Keen avarice and murder shrink abashed,
As from the presence of an angry God.

CONSTANTIA.

Thy flattering picture charms a mother's heart.

VELORA.

O! had you heard with what angelic sweetness
He banished terror from our troubled minds!
Music is harsh to that consoling voice:

He raised us from despair: he kindly promised
To place my father, and his helpless child
In the protecting walls of distant Goa.

CONSTANTIA.

Tho' difficult the task, he has achieved it,
And thy full gratitude exceeds his bounty.

VELORA.

No! dear Constantia! why is Heaven adored.
But for such blessings, as I owe to him?
Is he not all maternal love can wish?

CONSTANTIA.

Yes! my Velora, with a conscious pride
I watched his youth, have seen the richest bloom
Of honor, glowing on his ripened spirit:
O! how unlike his sex! those hypocrites,
Who humbly bend to innocence and beauty,
But cover falsehood with devotion's mask!

VELORA.

What injuries excite thy gentle nature
To these severer thoughts?

CONSTANTIA.

In some fit hour
I will unfold to thee a wretched story,
Touching the cruel father of Sylveyra,
That will amaze thy tenderness, and make
E'en the warm current of thy glowing veins
Run cold with horror: but thy present danger
Claims, dear Velora, our immediate care:
Thou'rt still a captive; still a Bramin's daughter.

VELORA.

O! do not think that even love can tempt
Velora to forget her filial duties,
And wound the bosom of an aged father,
Who watched unceasing o'er her early youth,
Nor asked existence, but to guard his child!
I know how firmly his pure heart is wedded
To all our ancient rites; and that his spirit
Would rather give me to the tomb, much rather,
Than yield his daughter to a foreign hand;
That worst pollution to the race of Brama!

CONSTANTIA.

When first my generous son, beneath my care
Placed thee, a lovely captive, I observed
His growing passion with a mother's fears:
But charmed, Velora, by thy winning sweetness,
I own I gazed upon your chaste affections
With such pure joy, as the good angels felt,
When first o'er Eden's infant bowers they hovered,
And fondly viewed the new created pair,
While innocence and love were all their portion:
Yet still there's danger, lest ye should imbitter
The virtuous Bramin's closing eve of life:
Canst thou believe thy love will long elude
The quick observance of an anxious father?

VELORA.

Alas! too soon will that unhappy father,
Worn out with age, the martyr of affliction,
Be severed from the idol of his care:
One dying wish he formed, and thy dear son
Has nobly promised to restore his captives
Safe to their native seat: 'tis there my father

Yet hopes to purify his parting soul:
There will I tend his short remains of life,
Calm all his fears, and sooth his latest pang.

CONSTANTIA.

O! thou dear paragon of filial duty!
Blest be thy every purpose! but my child,
I have yet heavier fears!

VELORA.

Whate'er they are,
O! yet awhile suppress them! for behold
My father bends his feeble steps towards us.

SCENE III.

CONSTANTIA, VELORA, PERSOD.

PERSOD.

May mighty Brama, and his purest spirits
Watch o'er our gentle friend, whose pitying eyes
Have looked so kindly on an old man's sorrows,
And this sole treasure of his trembling age!
Has aught yet reached thee from our dear protector,
Thy gallant son?

CONSTANTIA.

No! venerable sire,
He's yet engaged upon the neigbouring shore

To treat with fiercest foes, with whom, I fear,
His sword must arbitrate: protect him Heaven!

PERSOD.

Such prayers are mine: nor can thy bosom feel
A dearer interest in his precious life.

VELORA.

Still let us cherish hope! nor yield our hearts
To false suggestions of ill-grounded fear!
If the mild works of peace demand his presence,
Does not persuasion, dwelling in his voice,
Assure us of success? if cruel war
Call him reluctant to the fields of blood,
Where'er he turns, does not resistless valour
Guide the keen lightning of his conquering sword,
And victory guard him, with her golden wings?

PERSOD.

Alas! my child, a more immediate terror
Has seized my trembling heart: thou know'st, the Viceroy
Saw thee attendant on my helpless age:
He dwelt upon thy beauties with an eye
Of fierce desire.

CONSTANTIA, *(aside.)*

Good Heaven! it was my fear.

VELORA.

O! my kind father, from thy fondness springs
This vain surmise; for is not mighty Castro
Most noble, generous, merciful, and just?

PERSOD.

The purest virtue melts in passion's flame,

When boundless power appears a ready pander
To every wild desire: where is our refuge,
Defenceless as we are?

CONSTANTIA.

Unhappy father!

PERSOD.

Wilt thou assure my trembling heart, that when
These dim eyes close in death, thou wilt protect
My child, nor yield her to his guilty passion!

CONSTANTIA.

Hear me thou good old man! before the throne
Of Heaven's great father kneeling, thus I swear,
By all the sorrows, I have known myself,
And by the recompense, my soul expects
For all its sufferings, in a purer world,
I will protect thy daughter as my own.

PERSOD.

Enough! enough! O! let me wound no more
Thy tender bosom, with an old man's terrors!
I will retire; and pray the gracious Brama,
To aid the virtuous purpose of thy soul.

VELORA.

Let thy Velora on thy steps attend!

PERSOD.

No! my sweet child! rest with thy gentle friend!
I go to bend before the lord of life,
The one, that ever was, and to implore him,
That in what form soe'er he deigns to clothe
My parting spirit, it may still be near thee;

And in these dangers, that my fondness dreads,
Still hover round thee, and preserve my child.

(Exit.

SCENE IV.

CONSTANTIA, VELORA.

CONSTANTIA.

O thou unfortunate! if Castro love thee,
Farewell to all our peace, for in his love
Lies misery and ruin!

VELORA.

Is he not
The noble character, that fame reports him?

CONSTANTIA.

Yes! my Velora, when his manly spirit
Appears unsullied by the mists of passion,
It is the very mirror, that presents
The perfect form of honor.—Yet beware!
If ever Castro speak to thee of love,
Drop not a word, from which he may collect
Thy fond attachment to Sylveyra's virtues,
For if thy beauties have inflamed the Viceroy,
(I know his nature) 'twill be jealous passion,
And frantic as the tyger o'er his prey,
Whose fierce suspicion, and whose fell revenge,

Would drink the life-blood of his fellow savage,
For daring but to look on't—trust my care!
And keep this counsel treasured in thy heart!

SCENE V.

VELORA, THE VICEROY.

THE VICEROY, *(entering)*

Alone by all my wishes! her soft bosom
By pensive solitude prepared for love! } *aside.*
Can we not teach the beautiful Velora
To lose the memory of Cambaya's shore
In the gay pleasures of our sumptuous city?
Will young Sylveyra rob us of those charms,
And to her desolated country bear
His lovely charge?

VELORA.

My lord, his word is past.

THE VICEROY.

Who, that from ocean's dangerous depths had brought
A pearl of such pure lustre, would throw back
The peerless gem?

VELORA.

That pity, which alone
Inspired the brave Sylveyra to protect,

And lead us to this realm, will prompt him still
To crown the just hopes of an aged exile.
My heart, my lord, can form no dearer wish,
Than to attend my father's injured age;
This sacred duty calls me, and must plead
My pardon with your highness.

THE VICEROY.

Stay, Velora!

VELORA.

My lord! my lord! release me! nor oppress
A helpless captive!

THE VICEROY.

By my life I worship
Thy wonderous charms: It is my heart's ambition
To court the kindness of thy gentle bosom:
If thou wilt meet the passion of my soul,
My proud affection will delight to throw
The richest splendors of dominion round thee,
And make thy station, like thy matchless beauty,
The gaze and envy of this Eastern world!

VELORA.

Reflect, my lord, that filial cares alone
Claim, and possess Velora's every thought!

THE VICEROY.

No more, thou lovely coy one! force no more
From those soft lips such ill-agreeing sounds,
While every beauty in thy blushing form,
With all the energy of warm expression
Tells nobler truths, more consonant to nature;
While these enchanting eyes inflame my soul,

And sparkle promises of bliss too high
For human voice to utter. In my arms
Come let me clasp thee !

VELORA.

O ! forbear, my lord !
Nor force me to alarm an aged father !
I must retire : and may the God you serve,
Instruct your cooler reason to renounce
These fatal thoughts !

(Exit.

THE VICEROY, *(alone.)*

O ! thou luxuriant beauty !
Thou must be mine, for all thy weak resistance
Is like the failing mound, that art would raise
To stop the rising billows.

SCENE VI.

THE VICEROY, GARCIA.

THE VICEROY.

What would Garcia ?

GARCIA.

My Lord, I bring great news : our foes are scattered,
The brave Sylveyra has dislodged the Moors.

THE VICEROY.

Now blest be Portugal's protecting saint!
The young Sylveyra gallantly pursues
The example of his race.

GARCIA.

Yet, noble Castro,
We see thee tempted from the paths of fame
By love's illusive fire:—tho' thy great soul
Should, like the Eagle, keep its native height,
And scorn to gaze but on the beams of glory.

THE VICEROY.

O Garcia, I regard with envious wonder
The steady virtues of thy happier mind:
No rebel passions can dethrone thy reason;
Mine is the slave of appetite: I feel
My blind attachment to this lovely Indian
Death to my peace, and poison to my fame,
Yet doat on my perdition: ne'er did passion
Reign so despotic in my subject heart,
Since our young days, when my disastrous love
Deprived the injured Isabel of life.

GARCIA.

Tho' all her sorrows have so long been buried,
Her fate still touches me, and to this hour
I curse her cruel father; whose proud soul
Crushed the fair hopes of your appointed nuptials,
And sunk his wounded daughter to the grave;
Tho' rumour whispers that her death was feigned.

THE VICEROY.

O! couldst thou bring that martyred saint to life,
Then might I worship thee: No! Garcia, no!

'Twas not her father; 'twas my fury killed her,
The jealous fury of a mind distracted.
In some convenient season, I will tell thee
All the past crimes, and frenzy of my life,
For thou wilt turn them to my preservation;
Thy generous counsel will oft set before me
My madness past; by friendship's guardian power
Wean my weak spirit from its present passion,
And save me from myself:—but see Molina.

SCENE VII.

THE VICEROY, GARCIA, MOLINA.

THE VICEROY.

Now, Garcia, haste, and summon to our presence
The wretched parent of this gallant victor!
For years secluded in domestic sorrow:
I have not seen her, but we now have tidings,
That will instruct e'en grief itself to smile.

(*Exit Garcia.*

Say! is this brilliant victory dearly bought
By our brave soldiers' blood?—whom have we lost?

MOLINA.

Never did Portugal's prevailing bands
Obtain such vantage at a cheaper rate.

SCENE VIII.

THE VICEROY, MOLINA ; GARCIA *entering with* CONSTANTIA, *and* VELORA, *in veils.*

THE VICEROY.

Still, gentle lady, in the veil of sorrow!
Thy son's exploits shall turn these mourning weeds
To robes of triumph :—now, Molina, speak
The deeds of this young conqueror!

MOLINA.

Our foes,
Who on the neighbouring hills encamped apart,
Disclaimed all treaty ; threatening e'en the siege
Of this imperial city : with this aim
The artful Renegado had assembled
All the confederate princes in a fort
On the adjacent shore, whose chosen guard
Trebled our scanty number : by surprise
The brave Sylveyra made a fierce attack ;
Twice to the earth he struck the base Coutino,
And slew the author of this dangerous league.

THE VICEROY.

By Heaven this action binds him to my heart.

CONSTANTIA.

Great God of battles! to thy throne I bend
And thank thee with my tears.

MOLINA.

Beside that traitor,
The Moorish Chieftain fell: instant dismay
Seized all their host; and infinite had been
The general slaughter, but the just Sylveyra
Proclaimed free pardon to the native Indians.

VELORA.

Reward him for it, all ye host of heaven,
Who teach him still to emulate your nature,
And be the guardian of a fallen race!

MOLINA.

This well-timed mercy ratified our conquest;
And, the great business of his mission ended,
Ere now Sylveyra is embarked for Goa.

THE VICEROY.

He shall have noble welcome. Gentle mourner!
Let every trace of your past grief be lost,
In the gay triumph of your gallant son!

CONSTANTIA.

Your generous kindness to a mother claims
Her praise, but my full heart can only thank you
With silence, and with tears.

(Exit with Velora.

THE VICEROY.

Molina haste!
And bid our Citizens with festive triumph
Meet this young Victor!

(Exit Molina.

Garcia, though I love him.
As if he were my son, for he inherits
The noble virtues of our vaulted friend;
Yet my heart tells me, his return portends
I know not what of ill.—Didst thou observe
With what a fond idolatry of praise
The warm Velora magnified his mercy?

GARCIA.

O! my dear lord! remember, that we stand
Upon enchanted ground! hence, let us fly!
Then may I clear your heart, that field of honor,
From weeds of love and jealousy, whose growth
Would choke the harvest of your rich renown.

THE VICEROY.

Yes! honest Garcia, thou shalt freely use
A right inherent in a soul like thine;
Search, and correct, my foibles, till thy friend
Shall bless thee as the guardian of his glory.

(*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX.

CONSTANTIA, *(entering alone.)*

At length he's gone; and my o'erburdened heart
May vent its perturbation: cruel Castro!
How has thy presence wakened all my wrongs,
Yet with them all my love! O! did not memory
Still haunt me with thy base neglect and scorn,
How would my heart again embrace delusion,

And idolize thy nobleness of nature!
Shall I, as if ascending from the grave,
Burst like a spectre on thy acting sight,
And while thou'rt lost in horror and amazement,
Speak transport to thee in soul-piercing sounds,
And fondly cry, Sylveyra is thy son?——
Perhaps the hardened heart, that could endure
To leave his infant innocence an outcast,
Might still disclaim the offspring, it deserted;
And shall I court thy pride to own thy child?
Save me from such abasement! my proud soul
Its secret shall retain:—in my last hour
I will amaze thee with a wondrous tale,
And teach the libertine, the cruel father,
To melt, and to revere the sacred force
Of female virtue, and maternal love!

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

THE PALACE OF THE VICEROY.

THE VICEROY, SYLVEYRA.

THE VICEROY.

Yes! thou bright mirror of our martial youth,
In thy brave deeds, which make the veteran's cheek
Turn pale with envy, my exulting heart
Feels a paternal joy:—But O! Sylveyra,
I draw thee now from festive admiration
To speak of doubts, that prey upon my peace,
And ask thy private aid.

SYLVEYRA.

I hold my life
Of value, only as it may repay
Your generous bounty to my orphan youth.

THE VICEROY.

Thy much loved guardian lives again in thee.
Thou art the perfect image of his valour;
And O! thou gallant youth, I hope to find
The very spirit of his friendship in thee;
Warm, active, generous; proud to sacrifice
His own most eager purpose, to promote
The dearer interest of the man he loved:
Have I a right, Sylveyra, to expect
Such services from thee?

SYLVEYRA.

Wrong not, my lord,
This grateful breast by so unkind a question!
If there is aught, that now may prove my zeal,
Name it most quickly! and may glorious danger
Endear the business to my eager heart!

THE VICEROY.

Then answer frankly one important question!

SYLVEYRA.

Falsehood, my lord, has never stained my lips!

THE VICEROY.

Say, on a soldier's faith, is it your purpose
To yield Velora to her distant home?

SYLVEYRA.

My lord, humanity first made the promise,
And honor binds me to its strict performance.

THE VICEROY.

Blest be thy words! their animating power
Dispels my only fear! thy spirit then

Has 'scaped the magic of this fair enchantress.
Now, my Sylveyra, now, without disguise,
I will unfold to thee my secret hopes;
And thou wilt aid the wishes of thy friend.
Know then, I doat upon thy lovely charge
With all the fierce excess of fondest passion!
Thou must engage the excellent Constantia
To be my advocate:—nay! do not start!
Think not, ingenuous youth, I would employ
Thy virtuous parent in a task of shame,
Too gross for utterance! no! my thoughts are bent
On pure designs of honorable love:
I mean to bind Velora to my heart
By all the sanctity of marriage vows.

SYLVEYRA.

My lord, it is impossible.

THE VICEROY.

What dost thou mean?
Why falters thy faint voice? Ha! tell me wherefore
Across thy changing visage does there fly
That sickly cloud?—By Heaven it is the cast
Of rival terror:—Thou dost love Velora:
Thou hast deceived me; all thy coward frame
Declares the fraud, and trembles at detection.

SYLVEYRA.

Indeed, my lord, you're blinded by excess
Of vehement passion:—'tis amazement chains
My failing voice: O! what will Lisbon say?
Lisbon, who loudly talks of Castro's fame!
How will she credit this degrading love,
That makes the noblest of her heroes, stoop
From his proud height, to wed an Indian captive?

How can this wondrous purpose be achieved?
Is not Velora of the Bramin race,
Whose laws condemn such union as a crime,
Which e'en their sacred, purifying stream,
The mighty Ganges, cannot wash away?

THE VICEROY.

And are thy fears awakened by my fame?
Are they the fears of friendship, not of love?
I fain would think so: if they are, perchance
I may relieve thy kind concern by trusting
My brightest hopes to thy congenial heart.

SYLVEYRA.

Your bounty has o'erwhelmed me: witness Heaven,
That I esteem your happiness and glory
Still dearer than my own!

THE VICEROY.

My dear Sylveyra,
My spirit tells me, that the hand of Heaven,
Whose secret agency so oft amazes
The blinded eye of human apprehension,
Has given this wondrous impulse to my soul,
Which passes the weak power of vulgar passion,
And bears the signet of divine controul.
Thou know'st what wrongs this mild and gentle race
Have felt for ages from the fierce Arabian;
And thou hast heard what injuries they suffered
From those, whose avarice abused the power
Of this our great vicegerency.

SYLVEYRA.

Thank Heaven,
The gracious tenor of your mild dominion

Redeems the glory of the Christian name!

THE VICEROY.

Perhaps my union with the dear Velora
May lead to revolutions of such wonder,
As will astonish the unthinking earth:
Perhaps, Sylveyra 'tis reserved for us
To pass the fame of Europe's proudest boast;
To pluck the crescent from this Eastern sphere,
And from the Moors redeem this richer world,
Too long the prey of Mahomet!

SYLVEYRA.

Yet how,
How is it possible, my lord, to move
The mighty bar of disagreeing faith,
That must obstruct the marriage you design?

THE VICEROY.

There, my Sylveyra, thou must aid my wishes:
The kind Constantia, whose engaging virtues
I fully know, tho' accident has kept me
A stranger to the graces of her person;
She must exert those virtues to o'ercome
The idle scruples of her Indian guests:
Haste, and inform her, how thy friend entreats,
That to their gentle minds she will display
The bright advantage of so blest a union!
The dear Velora shall from hence be deemed
The guardian goddess of the Indian world;
O haste! and swift to my impatient heart
Return, with flattering presage of success!

SYLVEYRA.

I fain would execute your highness' pleasure;

But, conversant with Brama's rigid laws
I know they cannot bend to your desire:
But ere I go, your highness will allow me
To grant a moment to my brave associates,
Who by their gallant services obtained
My promise to present them to your favor.

(Exit.

SCENE II.

THE VICEROY, *(alone.)*

I like not the expression of his features:
No warmth of zeal, no eagerness of friendship
Shines in his downcast eye:—his brow is darkened
With deep distress, and jealous apprehension,
That tempt me still to think, he is my rival:
I must be satisfied: I will remark
His looks more closely in Velora's presence:
My keen observance will detect his eye
In the first flashes of his treacherous love;
And if I see their melting glances meet——
O! the curst image sets my brain on fire.

(He walks disturbed toward the end of the stage,

SCENE III.

SYLVEYRA, *entering with* MOLINA *and* CARASCO.

Brave friends, behold our Viceroy is alone,
And waits to thank you for your gallant deeds,
Of which I made to him most true report!
Some secret orders, that command me hence,
Allow me not a minute of delay.

(Exit.

SCENE IV.

MOLINA, CARASCO, THE VICEROY *coming forward.*

My resolution's fixt——I'll follow him——
Confusion! I am stopt——Where is Sylveyra?

MOLINA.

My lord, this very instant he departed,
With hasty zeal, on your immediate service.

THE VICEROY.

Insidious speed!—new evidence of passion!

'Tis plain, 'tis fully proved: *(aside.)* Most brave Molina,
Forgive me !——I am slow to thank thy valor !
Thou hast done bravely;—Lisbon shall re-echo
Thy great exploits, and thence thou shalt receive
The worthier thanks of a much nobler master !

MOLINA.

Your highness overpays my poor deserts.

THE VICEROY.

Wretch ! while I pause, he gains the happy minutes
Of festive joy to seize her melting softness,
Mock my fond hopes, and triumph in his falsehood.
(aside.)
Your pardon ! worthy friends ! gallant Carasco,
It grieves me, that I want the leisure now
To dwell, as oft with pleasure I have done,
On thy bold services; but cares of moment
Perplex, and call me hence:—yet rest assured,
Your merits shall not perish in my mind.

SCENE V.

MOLINA, CARASCO.

MOLINA.

Amazement ! in my life I never saw
His thoughts so troubled, and his steady soul

So shaken from its balance.

CARASCO.

This is nothing:
Your sapient governor, your moral Viceroy,
The saint, whom you have canonized so long,
Will rave, as I am told, from morn to midnight
In praise of poor Sylveyra's Indian girl.

MOLINA.

Peace! thou art splenetic:—I know, Carasco,
Thou lov'st him not: but, as I am a soldier,
I do not think, our country, or the world,
Has e'er produced a man more richly graced
With manly virtues, valor, truth and justice.

CARASCO.

Curse on his justice! for it robbed me once
Of the most luscious beauty, that e'er blest
A soldier's fortune in the chance of war.

MOLINA.

Peace! peace! thy very accusation crowns him
With purest praise.

CARASCO.

Plague on his purity!
'Tis hypocritical——

MOLINA.

Farewell, Carasco,
Thou'rt in the raging fit of envious spleen,
The pest of social pleasure: but if soon
Thou gain'st thy more companionable humour.

Thou'lt find me on the walls.

(Exit.

CARASCO, *(alone.)*

If I forgive him, may I ne'er again
Seize the rich plunder of submissive beauty!
I know he is accustomed in disguise
To take his midnight walk of observation,
To pry into the manners of his people;
Perhaps indulging his own secret lust.
My sword is tinged with subtle Indian poison,
Whose slightest touch is mortal, and by Heaven
I will repay him for my wrongs, if e'er
He chance to thwart me in a nightly brawl.

(Exit.

SCENE VI.

The Scene changes, and discovers

VELORA, *and* SYLVEYRA.

VELORA.

It is the utmost height of human joy
To meet thee thus:—to see my guardian hero
Restored from danger, and with glory crowned.
Blest be the God, who hearing all our vows,

Watched o'er thy precious life, thro' every peril;
And now, in pity to an orphan's prayers,
Places once more the desolate Velora
In the dear circle of thy saving arms!

SYLVEYRA.

Come to my heart! and live for ever there!
There shalt thou reign:—it is thy own dominion:
Not all the princes of the earth should tear
Thy sacred form from this unshaken throne.

VELORA.

O! my Sylveyra, in the flood of joy
My fears were drowned; too soon alas its swell
Subsiding, shews the hideous form of danger.
Already thou hast heard, I know thou hast,
Of Castro's love, for in thy looks I read
An anxious terror struggling with delight.
How canst thou shield me from his base designs?

SYLVEYRA.

No! my Velora no! I will not wrong him:
There dwells no baseness in his noble nature;
His love, like all the conduct of his life,
Is open, artless, manly, generous;
Not thinking that the Christian light has dawned
On thy unclouded soul, he has conjured me
To aid his ardent wish:—To vanquish for him
Each obstacle, that Indian laws may raise,
To bar his hopes of marriage with Velora.

VELORA.

What couldst thou answer to such cruel language?
Didst thou reveal the secret of our loves?

SYLVEYRA.

He knows it not! amazement, grief and pity
Robbed me of utterance: yes! by Heaven I pity
The agonies of mind, he must endure:
He loves thee with a fond excess of passion;
His liberal heart would grace thy charms with all
The treasures of the East; and make thy beauty
The worthy partner of imperial power:
And what can I? a needy child of fortune!
Almost a poor dependant on his bounty!
May I, Velora, from a prince seclude
A precious jewel, and in secret wear it,
Bound to my heart? while he would nobly give it
The place, that its unrivalled lustre claims
To charm the admiring world?

VELORA.

Canst thou suspect
That pomp, that splendor, that the wealth of worlds,
Could for a moment, in Velora's mind,
Pretend to competition with thy love?
And couldst thou, tell me, couldst thou, e'en in thought,
Resign Velora to a rival's hand?

SYLVEYRA.

My faithful love! by thy dear self I swear,
I ne'er could see thee in another's arms,
And hold my reason:——madness must ensue:
Should angels call thee to their purer world,
My frantic mind would murmur at its loss,
Unknowing how to yield thee to my God.

VELORA.

Here then, thou second worship of my soul!

I plight to thee my everlasting vow,
To have no law, no lot, no will but thine;
To be the faithful partner of thy fortunes,
Thro' all the chances of this chequered world;
For O! Sylveyra, death will soon dissolve
Those dear, and sacred ties of filial duty,
That only could divide my heart with thee.

SYLVEYRA.

Good angels guard thy father's closing life
From every pang! and make his latest sigh
Soft as an infant's slumber! dear Velora,
Thou must not sink too deeply in thy sorrow;
No! I will raise thee up, thou drooping flower,
Beat to the earth by the injurious tempest!
My love shall watch o'er thy reviving bloom,
And fondly shield it from each future storm.

VELORA.

Alas! Sylveyra, terror joins with grief
To rend my troubled heart: think of the Viceroy!
Think how to ward the dangers, that may rise
E'en to thy precious life, my sole protector,
From all the frenzy of his fatal passion!

SYLVEYRA.

Fear not! my love, for Castro still is noble!
He still regards me with parental kindness.
In some convenient, and propitious hour
I will, with gentlest arts of preparation,
And candid truth, unfold to him——

VELORA.

O! no!
No! I conjure thee! drop that dangerous thought!

Who shall defend thee in the sudden storm
Of jealous fury, armed with boundless power?
By all our mutual vows let me entreat thee
To yield that office to Constantia's care!

SYLVEYRA.

Thou lovely monitor! I yield my heart
To thy kind counsels.

VELORA.

I will fly to summon
The dear Constantia to consult thy safety:
Then to my father! in his close of life
I feel his claims yet stronger on my heart;
Farewell!

SYLVEYRA.

Yet stay! thou dear angelic softness!
Stay yet a moment! let me kiss away
This heavenly dew of filial tenderness,
That glistens on the roses of thy cheek!
Farewell!

(Exit Velora.

SCENE VII.

SYLVEYRA, THE VICEROY.

THE VICEROY *(entering as* VELORA *goes out.)*

Distraction! death! thou treacherous boy!
So young, and so accomplished in deceit!

Thou viper! that I cherish in my bosom
To sting me into madness! have I caught thee?
Surprised thy guilty secrets, and beheld thee
Staining the brilliant ruby of her lip
With thy false breath?

SYLVEYRA.

Just, and noble Castro!
Recover but the firmness of thy soul,
And thou shalt own, that I have ne'er deceived thee!

THE VICEROY.

Oh! insolence of falsehood! not deceived me!
E'en now thy base confusion proves thee false;
And coward guilt denies thy faltering tongue
The power to frame an artful subterfuge,
To give thee e'en the varnish of a villain.

SYLVEYRA.

My lord! I scorn the unmanly accusation;
I grieve indeed that you have seen our loves,
But my pure lips have never breathed a falsehood
To hide them from your sight: I will avow
It was my wish to keep them still concealed:
Not with a coward's treachery and fear:
No! from a nobler cause, from generous pity.

THE VICEROY.

Thou insolent!—thy pity!—patience, Heaven!
Patience! is Castro then debased so far,
To be the pity of a slave like this?
What! while my generous soul was idly dreaming
Of virtuous love, and purest admiration,
Thou, like a secret sacrilegious thief,

Hast basely robbed the shrine of sacred beauty,

SYLVEYRA.

My lord! my father! grant me patient hearing.

THE VICEROY.

Hear thee! thou traitor to that generous friendship,
Which called thee forth from darkness into glory!
Hear thee! for what? thou canst no longer make me
The easy dupe of thy detested falsehood;
And wouldst thou boast, it has been thine to riot
In the rich plunder of her prostrate beauty,
And teach thy willing wanton to deride
Her nobler claims to a superior station?

SYLVEYRA

My lord! my lord! power has no privilege
To sanctify the infamy of slander;
And thou dost slander innocence itself,
A soul as spotless, as the hand of Heaven
Has e'er inshrined in woman's angel form:
This purity is placed beneath my guard,
And when I want the spirit to defend it,
May I be branded by the public voice!——
For your past bounties to my orphan youth,
I spoke them many and magnificent;
But thus insulted, my indignant honor
Disclaims the debt, these injuries have cancelled.

THE VICEROY.

Thou wretch! who mak'st ingratitude thy glory,
Soon shalt thou feel the power, thou hast provoked:
Velora was thy prisoner, only held
In just dependance on our sovereign pleasure.

I shall resume a grant, so ill deserved,
And made so rashly by deluded bounty.

SYLVEYRA.

Resume thy grant! Velora's free as air;
The voice of justice, and thy own award
Pronounced her free; and I will guard that freedom
E'en with my life, against the uplifted arm
Of majesty itself.

THE VICEROY.

Presumptuous upstart!
What! canst thou threaten too?—by Heaven 'tis well:
I thank thee: thy presumption has restored
My condescending spirit to itself;
It will forget its dignity no more
To join in altercation with thy baseness:
No! I will teach thee, false ungrateful boy!
How poor, how low, how lost a thing thou art,
Stript of that favor, which thy fraud abused.

(Exit.

SCENE VIII.

SYLVEYRA *(alone.)*

He's gone in the dark storm of jealous anger,
And sullen vengeance—my indignant spirit
O'erstepped its native bound of moderation—
But 'tis the cause of innocence and virtue!

SCENE IX.

SYLVEYRA, CONSTANTIA, VELORA.

CONSTANTIA.

Alone ! my son ! did we not hear this moment
The voice of Castro, terrible in anger ?

SYLVEYRA.

O ! let me banish from your gentle bosoms
This fond excess of fear !

VELORA.

My loved Sylveyra !
You hide the fatal truth !—his frantic passion
Has dared to threaten, your most precious life :
I know it has.

SYLVEYRA.

Believe me, dear Velora—

VELORA.

If this weak beauty can produce such horror,
May Heaven resume its gift, and I will call
Deformity a blessing !

SYLVEYRA.

Teach me, Heaven !
To calm this cruel agony of terror !

CONSTANTIA.

Reflect, dear daughter, that I keep concealed
A mystery of such important nature,
As may preserve us in severer perils !

SYLVEYRA.

Name it ! and save her from these killing fears !

CONSTANTIA.

Alas ! my son, I have a tale to tell thee
Of such high moment to thy peace and honor,
That it requires long hours of coolest leisure
To unfold it as I ought.

SCENE X.

SYLVEYRA, CONSTANTIA, VELORA ; *enter* OFFICER *with* GUARDS.

OFFICER.

Gallant Sylveyra,
Obedient to the Viceroy's hard command,
I come, constrained, to bear thee to confinement.

SYLVEYRA.

Has jealousy so drowned thy sense of honor,
Unhappy Castro ? by my life I pity
This frenzy of thy soul : Sir, I obey.

VELORA.

Yet stay! 'tis agony to lose thee thus——

CONSTANTIA, *(to the Officer.)*

Thou generous servant of a cruel master,
Canst thou, in pity to a mother's tears,
Canst thou allow me one short hour's delay?

OFFICER.

Believe me, lady, on a soldier's truth,
It grieves me sorely to refuse thy prayer;
But if my pity granted thy request,
It would be at the hazard of my life.

SYLVEYRA.

Sir, I attend you——ministers of mercy,
Descend to soothe these dear unhappy mourners

VELORA.

Stay! my Sylveyra, take me to thy prison!
Am I not sworn thy partner to the grave?

SYLVEYRA.

My faithful love! O! melt not my firm soul
With these fond tears! no! by our hopes I beg thee
To call forth all thy latent powers, that arm
Thy own great mind, and aid our dear Constantia,
Absorbed in grief, and petrified with terrors.
Farewell! farewell!

(Exit with Officer and Guards.

SCENE XI.

CONSTANTIA, VELORA.

VELORA.

Preserve him, righteous Heaven!

CONSTANTIA.

Yes! I will fly, and fall before his father;
That, that must save him.

VELORA.

Dear Constantia! speak!
She hears me not:—alas! unhappy mother!
There is a wildness in her looks and language,
That pierces to my heart.

CONSTANTIA.

And yet 'tis dangerous:
I know the fierceness of his cruel father.
O! I am plunged again in doubt's dark sea.

VELORA.

Guard her, ye angels! for excess of sorrow
Has robbed her tortured spirit of its reason.

CONSTANTIA.

No! my sweet child, I am not yet so lost:
But there's a secret conflict in my soul,
To which thou art a stranger——I will fly,

And kneel for entrance at his prison door:
For thou, my son, thou only canst decide
This agonizing doubt: thy voice alone
Must guide me in this crisis of our fate.

SCENE XII.

CONSTANTIA, VELORA, MOLINA, CARASCO.

CONSTANTIA.

O! good Molina lead me to my son!

MOLINA.

We come to calm your fears; this sudden mandate
Is but a momentary start of anger;

CONSTANTIA.

Now I conjure thee gain me instant entrance
Into Sylveyra's prison!

MOLINA.

Gentle friend,
As yet it is impossible:——but soon——

CONSTANTIA.

Ah! talk not of delay! thou canst not know it,
But I a secret must impart to him,
Of power, to make e'en frantic murder pause.

MOLINA.

I will attend you to the citadel——

CONSTANTIA.

Come, let us haste, my generous friend! and thou
Noble Carasco, be Velora's guard!

(Exit with Molina.

SCENE XIII.

VELORA, CARASCO.

CARASCO.

Vain is their hope: but if Velora's courage
Is equal to the task, I will instruct her
To baffle this base Viceroy, and preserve
The injured youth, who claims her fondest care.

VELORA.

Then speak! and trust me, that no forms of danger
Shall shake the firmness of Velora's soul.

CARASCO.

Blest be thy spirit, for it merits all
The fond profusion of Sylveyra's love!
I know your mutual hopes:—now let my friendship
Accelerate your marriage, marked by Heaven
The happiness of both, and, in this crisis,
Your sole protection from the crimes of Castro!

VELORA.

How may this be?

CARASCO.

By night I will secure
A faithful priest, who, in disguise shall lead you
Into Sylveyra's prison, and unite
Your willing hands—still from your father's weakness
Conceal the secret!—To the baffled Viceroy
Let your blest lord, with joyous pride, proclaim
That holy vows have made you his for ever!
The foiled oppressor will no more pursue
Your hallowed beauties, but renounce a treasure
Thus guarded from his grasp, nor to be purchased
But by the price of complicated crimes.

VELORA.

I yield me to thy friendly guidance—hark!
It was my father's voice: attend me to him,
And still support me with thy generous counsel!

CARASCO.

Yet keep this project secret in thy breast,
E'en from Constantia, for her fond affection
Would hesitate, and tell us of thy danger!

VELORA.

We'll not alarm the kindness of her nature,
And for myself, come danger as it may,
I have no fears:—Carasco, you beheld
The young Orissa perish in the bloom
Of widowed beauty: you beheld her march,
Fondly observant of our Indian rites,
Nor moved by the dissuasive cries of friendship,
Thrice round the pile, which held the hallowed corse
Of her departed lord; then far within
The leafy bower, whose arches crowned the pile,
Take her firm seat as on a throne of glory,

With dignity undaunted, while her hand
Unshaken, kindled the consuming fire.

CARASCO.

It was a sight, that memory cannot lose.

VELORA.

You saw her with a smile of triumph, mock
The mounting blaze, which thro' her wasted frame
Shot thrilling agony, yet failed to force
One plaintive sigh from her superior soul:
Think of this scene, the subject of your wonder,
And know Velora's willing heart would bear
Those tortures twentyfold to save Sylveyra!
But to my father!

CARASCO.

Noble, fearless girl,
I worship thy warm heart; and by my sword
Will freely stake my safety for thy service.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—THE PALACE.

THE VICEROY, GARCIA.

THE VICEROY.

Garcia no more! thy intercession's vain:
Honor forbids us to recall this mandate
Of just correction.

GARCIA.

Think on whom it falls!
On one whom your fond bounty long has cherished
E'en as your child: the trust of a brave friend,
Who dying left you this rich legacy,
This sacred pledge of confidence and honor
Still to be worn with pride upon the heart.

THE VICEROY.

Away! for all you plead in his defence
Turns to the aggravation of his guilt,
And sanctifies my sentence.

GARCIA.

Think, my lord,
This is no trifling business! it demands
Most deep discussion; for on this award
Hangs all the glory of your life to come,
Nay all your honors past; if these are dear,
You must revoke this wrong, unguarded sentence;
You must, by Heaven, you must.

THE VICEROY.

Garcia, beware!
Relying on our ancient amity,
Thou dost presume too far upon my patience.

GARCIA.

Let fawning flattery be struck dumb with fear,
When her proud idol frowns! 'tis friendship's glory,
In spite of quick resentment's random fire,
To persevere in her most noble duty,
And counter-work the mines of treacherous passion.

THE VICEROY.

And thou art come, most sapient monitor,
To teach us wisdom, honesty and virtue.

GARCIA.

Yes! I will hold a faithful mirror to thee,
And shew thy troubled mind its own distortion;
Will hold it, tho' insulted with thy scorn,

E'en till that mind resume its native features,
And thank me for the service. Noble friend,
I know, thou dost believe thy sentence just:
But dive into thy heart, and thou wilt find
Velora's beauty, is Sylveyra's guilt.

THE VICEROY.

Leave us, presumptuous counsellor! thou canst not
Make firm authority revoke his mandate
By the vain preaching of thy pedant pride.

GARCIA.

No! Castro, no! I cannot, dare not yield thee
To the dominion of this tyrant passion,
Which may——

THE VICEROY.

O! patience Heaven! shall I for ever
Be rated thus by insolent dependants?

GARCIA.

Unhappy Castro! like a drowning wretch,
In a blind struggle, thou dost beat away
The very arm extended for thy safety;
Yes! I will leave thee on thy proud dismission;
May mightier visitation from above
Irradiate thy dark mind! may Isabel,
That blessed saint, that martyr of thy love,
Descend to watch o'er thy disordered spirit!
And dispossess thee of this jealous fiend,
Ere his blind fury gain increasing force,
And hurry thee to deeds of deepest horror!
Farewell! great injured mind, farewell!

THE VICEROY.

Yet stay!

My Garcia, stay!—thou hast pronounced a name,
Whose very sound's a sacred charm, of power
To melt the obdurate pride of fiercest anger.
Oh Isabel! thy wrongs are all revenged,
In the wild horrors of this troubled heart;
Garcia, I think, I know, thou art my friend;
But there's a rigor in thy steady soul,
That will not give thee even power to guess
The agonies of weaker minds:—by Heaven
I hate my own infirmity of nature;
And by my life I am ashamed to tell thee,
How this fierce love has preyed upon my soul,
Absorbing every faculty.

GARCIA, *(aside.)*

Now, friendship,
Aid me to make e'en passion's self the means
To work his preservation!

THE VICEROY.

This sweet Indian
Haunts my wild fancy still:—in every change
Of day, of night, of place, of occupation——
I see her in the vacancies of air:
I hear her magic voice in midnight silence:
And find the spirit of my life consumed
In this encreasing flame of fierce desire.

GARCIA.

Now Castro! I perceive a glimpse of hope,
That thy fond wish may yet succeed.

THE VICEROY.

Say how!

Dear Garcia, say ! O give me all thy meaning !

GARCIA.

Release Sylveyra !—shew the soft Velora
You scorn the advantage of tyrannic power,
And with a generous rivalship submit
To court her kindness !

THE VICEROY.

I approve thy counsel:
'Tis just, 'tis manly, 'tis like Garcia's soul
Untainted with a shadow of dishonor:
Yes ! thou shall see this frail, this feverish heart
Still not unworthy of a friend like thee.
Come ! follow me ! we'll hasten to Sylveyra,
Declare him free, and let him know how deeply
We both are debtors to thy signal virtue.

AN ATTENDANT, *(entering.)*

My lord, this paper will explain my office,
And plead my pardon, while I beg your highness
To grant me private audience.

THE VICEROY, *to* GARCIA.

Wait, my friend,
In my apartment ! I will join thee there !

(Exit Garcia.

SCENE II.

THE VICEROY, *and* ATTENDANT.

THE VICEROY, *(examining the letter.)*

Confusion! bound by secret, solemn oaths
To marry them in prison, and to-night!
Treacherous Velora! death! what in the moment,
When my fond soul with a forgiving frankness——

ATTENDANT.

My lord! the holy friar has enjoin'd me
To say, his life depends upon your silence.

THE VICEROY.

Go! let him banish fear! tell the good monk
His services are treasured in my heart.

(Exit Attendant.

SCENE III.

THE VICEROY, *(alone.)*

To-night appointed for your treacherous union!
Never shall night that consummation see.
These hours are mine, nor will I lose them—hence
Ye dainty scruples, of deluded honor!

Ye made me pause too long.—Love, manly love,
Nature's strong heir, not custom's puny child,
Points my fair prey, and like the hunter's cry
Leads my keen spirit to the chase of joy.

(Exit.

SCENE IV.

PERSOD *discovered sleeping on a couch, and* VELORA *sitting by him.*

VELORA.

Ye ministers of peace, O! kindly visit
His troubled slumbers! let not frightened nature
Thus lose the balmy influence of rest.

PERSOD, *(still sleeping.)*

Beware my child beware——this cruel Viceroy!

VELORA.

Unhappy father! how it grieves my soul
To see thee shaken by these painful terrors.

PERSOD.

No! tyrant, no! away! away! thou shalt not
Tear her from these weak arms—I clasp her still.

(waking.)

Good Heaven! where am I? O my child! my child!
Do I indeed embrace thee still, my daughter?

Is there no ruffian near?

VELORA.

Be not alarmed,
My gentle father!—'twas a vision only;
Here is no being but thy own Velora.

PERSOD.

Alas! my child, these terrifying phantoms
Tear my weak frame:——they shake me still with horror.
Methought I saw thee in the savage grasp
Of the fierce Viceroy:——hence distracting image!
It haunts me still.

VELORA.

Let thy beloved Velora
Calm these wild fears, and talk them into peace!

PERSOD.

Still! my sweet child, assure my trembling heart,
That when thy old weak guard is severed from thee,
As soon he must be, strong in native virtue,
Thou wilt resist the Viceroy's cruel aims,
That no rich offers of insidious love,
No terrors of the tyrant, shall betray
Thy yielding beauty to his impious arms!

VELORA.

No! by thy tender love, thy hallowed age,
By all the virtues of thy heart, I swear
No powers shall force me to that shameful fate.

PERSOD.

Thanks! my dear child, thy animating words

Breathe thro' my chilly breast a cheering glow,
And warm me with new life—methinks I gain
A new supply of strength; and I will use it
To taste the freshness of the evening air.
Bless thee, my kind attendant.

VELORA.

Still let my arm
Assist your steps!

PERSOD.

No! sweet support, I thank thee,
I will but venture to yon shady palm,
To soothe my troubled thoughts, and recollect
The thousand tender things, paternal love
Has yet to utter, ere our last adieu:
Remain thou here! and I will soon return.

(Exit.

SCENE V.

VELORA, *(alone.)*

Spare, gracious Heaven! the weakness of his age
From farther misery! whatever ills
Thy dreadful pleasure may design to pour
Upon our hapless race, O! keep them all
For my devoted head! nor more afflict
This mild, indulgent, helpless, fond old man!
Good Heaven! what voice!—it is our evil genius:
It is the Viceroy——

SCENE VI.

THE VICEROY, VELORA.

THE VICEROY, *(entering)*

Guards attend without.
Thanks be to love: I hold thee once again,
Bewitching beauty! and I know thee now:
Yes! under this soft veil of artless youth
Lies all the finished artifice of woman:
Thou canst forget thy Indian laws, and yield
This sacred treasure to an alien's arms:
With a refining spirit of delight,
Thou canst convert a dungeon to a scene
Of midnight bliss.

VELORA, *(aside.)*

Our purpose is betrayed!

THE VICEROY.

Yet have thy charms the fascinating power
To melt the fiercest wrath; I will forget
The cruel pangs thy treachery inspires,
If cancelling the offence, thou yet wilt grant me,
The dear rich recompense, for which my soul
So keenly pants with agony of passion.

VELORA.

Never! never!

THE VICEROY.

Perverse, fantastic girl!
Canst thou still doat upon an abject slave,
When royalty's extended arms would press
Thy beauty into rapture?

VELORA.

Yes! proud tyrant,
This constant heart will idolize for ever
That hero, whom thy crimes have made a prisoner:
Velora's firm and faithful soul, would rather
Embrace his bondage, than partake thy power,
E'en had thy pride the privilege of Heaven
To make its reign immortal.

THE VICEROY.

Rash Velora!
Thou dost provoke my wild insulted love
To sieze this golden minute, and repay
My tortured senses with a sweet revenge.
Come! thou shalt bless me.

VELORA.

Help! O! help me Heaven!

SCENE VII.

THE VICEROY, VELORA; PERSOD, *(entering and throwing himself before the Viceroy.)*

Turn! thou base tyrant! hear a father's voice!
Behold his weakness prostrate at thy feet!

Release! release my child! nor by this outrage
Wound sacred nature in a parent's soul!

THE VICEROY.

Distracting interruption! By my life
His reverend form, and his white hairs have struck
Blank awe thro' all my veins——
My trembling sinews have not power to take her
From his weak hold——and yet by Heaven she must not
Compleat the triumph of her treacherous love.
Guards there without!

Enter GUARDS.

PERSOD.

O mercy! mighty Castro,
Thou wilt not force my innocent child away,
While these paternal arms are stretched to save her.

THE VICEROY, *to the Guards.*

Reasons of state compel me to divide
These faithless captives: Soldiers! on your duty
I charge ye, part them with the gentlest violence,
And lead Velora to the western tower!

(Exit.

SCENE VIII.

VELORA, PERSOD, GUARDS.

VELORA.

Most cruel mandate! most inhuman Castro!

PERSOD.

No! ye vile slaves ye shall not tear her from me:
No! I will hang upon her darling form,
E'en 'till my heart strings break.

SOLDIER.

Old man, forbear
Thy sorrows grieve us—but we must obey—

PERSOD.

Curse my weak age!

VELORA.

My father! O! my father!

SCENE IX.

As the Guards force off VELORA, CONSTANTIA *enters with an Attendant, speaking as she enters.*

Mercy! they sieze! they tear Velora from us—
Unhappy father! whence this horrid outrage?

PERSOD.

Now, mighty Sieb! great avenging spirit!
Now, now exert thy power! it is thy servant;
It is a father calls, a father robbed,
Most basely robbed, in his enfeebled age,
Of his dear daughter, of his darling child.
Blast this fell ravisher!—with lightning's speed
Let death's fierce summons seize his haggard soul!

And if he has a child, O! make him feel
What tortures——mercy heaven! I faint——

(He falls.

CONSTANTIA.

O! save him!
Alas his feeble strings of life are broken
By this inhuman violence.—He breathes—
Now bear him gently hence!—in pity's name
Watch him with tenderest care till my return;
For I must hasten to preserve his child!

(they bear off Persod.

Now, Castro it is time thou shouldst behold
Thy Isabel yet lives; for thou art tost
On a tempestuous flood, and little know'st
What hidden rocks of horror thou art near:
My voice must point them to thy blinded spirit,
Ere thy wild passions plunge us in a gulf
Of deepest ruin, misery, and guilt.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—THE WESTERN TOWER.

VELORA, PANEEA.

VELORA.

Faithful Paneea! thy afflictive tidings
Have pierced my heart: alas! unhappy father.
Robbed of thy child, whose fondness should have watched
Thy parting spirit in its latest struggle,
And closed those eyes, that never, never cast
A look upon me, but of tenderest love!

PANEEA.

My gentle mistress, yield not to thy grief.

Think it was happy for his helpless age
To lay the burden of its misery down;

VELORA.

Yet have I reason for severest sorrow:
The wretched daughter, bound by dearest duty
To smooth the bed of death, there planted thorns
To pierce her dying father—'twas my zeal
To save Sylveyra's life; it was thy child,
Thou injured parent, whose misguided aim
So blindly sharpened thy expiring pangs.
O! were they not most terrible to look on?

PANEEA.

Let not such visionary fears alarm
Your troubled heart! in a short agony
Your injured father begged of Heaven to blast
The Viceroy's base designs: opprest he fainted;
But soon recovering, with more tranquil thought
Commended to his God your innocence;
Then death, as if in pity of his woes,
Approaching in the form of softest slumber
Released his spirit from this tainted sphere,
To gain the happier heights of purer being.

VELORA.

My good Paneea, thou dost vainly try
To soothe my anguish; e'en the happier child,
Who, blest with peace, yields, in her native land
An aged parent to the hand of Heaven,
By nature's dictates sheds the frequent tear
Of unrestrained affliction: what must I,
A captive orphan, robbed of that fond father,
Whose love, whose virtues were my kind support?

PANEEA.

May lenient time relieve thy wounded bosom!

VELORA.

Long will my filial heart lament his loss,
And conscious of its treasure torn away,
Ache at this cruel void.—But go, I pray thee,
Prepare the hallowed bale-tree to receive
His dear remains, and let thy faithful hand
Pour richest incense on the blazing pile,
Since bondage keeps me from that sacred duty!

PANEEA.

I will obey thee, dear, and gentle mistress,
Farewell! and all pure spirits be thy guard.

(Exit.

SCENE II.

VELORA, *(alone.)*

O! my Sylveyra, thou alone on earth
Art now the guardian of forlorn Velora;
And thou art doomed to bonds: perchance to fall
In the dark dungeon by the secret stab
Of base assassination: what is left
For me, disconsolate and wretched captive,
But in this solitude to sit and weep
My unexampled wrongs, and fatal love?

SCENE III.

While VELORA *remains in a pensive attitude,* THE VICEROY *enters unperceived.*

THE VICEROY.

She sees me not, absorbed in pensive sorrow;
Anxiety is painted in her eye;
And fear sits panting on her lovely bosom,
Like agitation on the aspin leaf
Trembling at every breeze: I dare not speak——
How may I find a favorable minute
To soothe her angry grief, and melt its rage
To pity and forgiveness?

VELORA, *(starting up.)*

Mercy, Heaven!
Thou base assassin! has thy soul the power
To look on the sad orphan, thou hast made?
Dar'st thou approach me? can thy heart so soon
Insult the sanctity of filial sorrow?

THE VICEROY.

Hear me, thou injured fair! by Heaven I vow
My heart is guiltless of thy father's death!
I would not have deprived his honored age
Of one short hour, one moment of existence,
To make my days immortal. Could my blood
Redeem his life, and give him to thy prayers,

I now would pour it freely at thy feet.

VELORA.

Vain penitence! did not thy cruel hand
Tear from his bleeding heart his darling child?

THE VICEROY.

'Twas the wild fear of seeing thee enrich
A rival's arms, 'twas that distracting image,
That drove my maddening soul to cruel force,
Unconscious of the horrors, that have followed:
I feel them now—joined to thy just reproach,
They make me execrate my own existence.
Thou injured orphan! in this wretched bosom
Plunge thy avenging dagger! it will end
Variety of pangs, more keen than all,
My fatal passion has e'er heaped on thee——
Remorse and anguish harrow up my mind;
Yet, while I gaze upon thee, fiercer love
Burns in my frantic heart: all milder thoughts,
Which penitence and pity can suggest,
He drowns; and leaves triumphant in my soul
The mighty madness of his raging fire.

VELORA.

Canst thou pretend to sorrow, to remorse,
And still insult me with licentious passion
In this afflictive hour?

THE VICEROY.

O! my Velora,
There is a tempest in my soul, that robs
My tongue of language, and my thoughts of reason;
But 'tis excess, 'tis agony of love,
Which claims thy pardon, which deserves thy pity.

GARCIA, *(behind the scenes.)*

Where is the Viceroy?—slave!—he must be found,
And I will pass thee——

THE VICEROY.

Ha! whose fury dares
Insult our guard?

SCENE IV.

THE VICEROY, VELORA; GARCIA *enters with an Officer.*

THE VICEROY.

O! Garcia, what inspires
This bold contempt?

GARCIA.

Thy danger, with a sense
Of honor, and attachment still remaining
To one, who little has deserved my friendship;
Whose fatal passions have at length produced
The dire effects proportioned to their guilt——
But 'tis no time to parley; thro' the city
All is confusion, anger, and revenge:
The swarming Indians, with religious fury,
Call on their murdered Bramin: all our troops,
With spirits ripe for mutiny, demand
Sylveyra's freedom. O! unhappy Castro,
If justice, glory, and our country's welfare

Are names yet dear to thee, appear!· come forth!
Haste! re-assume thy better self, and rush
To quell these tumults, ere they rise to crush thee.

THE VICEROY.

By hell's dark powers the tidings, thou hast brought,
Suit the wild tempest in my tortured brain:
Lead to the fiercest terrors of the storm!
I'll gladly meet them; for my soul's prepared
To rush upon the lightning's keenest flash,
And bless the thunders, that are launched against me.

GARCIA.

Come! my brave friend, let me but soothe thy spirit,
And lead thy virtue to a just atonement,
We yet may stop the ruin, that impends.

THE VICEROY *turning back, as he and* GARCIA *are quitting the stage.*

But my Velora!—mark me Officer!
Let her be treated with most humble duty!
Nor be her steps confined, except within
The utmost limits of our castle wall!
But place a double guard at every gate!
Farewell! thou matchless, dear, destructive beauty!

(*Exit with Garcia.*

VELORA. (*alone.*

Ye generous men! who strive to terminate
The base enthralment of our dear Sylveyra,
Still may the sense of all his bright perfections,
His great achievements, and his galling wrongs
Feed the just anger of your noble minds!

SCENE V.

VELORA, CARASCO.

CARSACO, *(entering hastily.)*

Come dear Velora, I at length have gained
The moment for thy freedom ; haste we now
To seize it, while this din of arms engages
The watchful goaler of thy captive beauty !

VELORA.

Away ! away ! thy fatal schemes have plunged
My soul in anguish, and destroyed my father—

CARASCO.

Oh ! blame me not ! it was the treacherous priest—
Curse on his abject, avaricious soul !
Whose sordid hopes betrayed us to the Viceroy :
But let us lose all thought of evils past
In haste to seize this golden, glorious minute,
That calls thee now from bondage : I have bribed
Sylveyra's guard ; will lead you to his prison,
And shew ye both a subterraneous door :
By this we gain the City ; sure protection
Awaits us there : Sylveyra's ready friends
Will rise in arms, the moment they behold him.

VELORA.

Thou generous friend ! I will embrace thy kindness,
And bless thee for it : lead me to my lord !
To save Sylveyra's precious life is now

My only hope, my only end of being.

CARASCO.

Come on! my lovely ward! now, Castro, mourn
Thy baffled fondness! I have foiled thee now;
And my past wrongs are happily repaid,
While with triumphant joy, I bear away
This beauteous treasure from thy tyrant grasp.

(*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.

GUARDS, (*behind the scene.*)

You must not pass us; 'tis the Viceroy's order.

CONSTANTIA, (*behind the scene.*)

Ye cruel guards! ye shall not force me back:
Affliction has a sacred claim to enter
The residence of power.

Entering with an Officer.

Thanks! gallant soldier!
Who hast compassion for a woman's woes!
Now guide me to the Viceroy!

OFFICER.

Lovely mourner
Believe me, he is absent from the castle!

CONSTANTIA.

Then by thy duty, wheresoe'er he is,
Conduct me to him! I have things to utter
Of higher moment than his life itself.

OFFICER.

Necessity constrains me to refuse
Thy eager prayer: the Viceroy is engaged
In scenes of tumult, which thy tender frame
Would tremble to encounter.

CONSTANTIA.

Prove my spirit!
I have a heart, that in the embattled field
Would cross the thunder of the bursting cannon
To reach the Viceroy: I conjure thee guide me!
I have an awful mystery to tell,
That yet may save him from impending crimes.

OFFICER.

Thy words amaze me, and enforce my service.

CONSTANTIA.

Lead on! and fear not! for the saints of Heaven
Will clear our way, and with their sacred power
Assist the parent to preserve her child.

(Exeunt.

SCENE VII.—THE CITY.

A TUMULT OF INDIANS.

FIRST INDIAN.

Revenge! revenge, for Brama's sacred blood!
For age and wisdom, murdered by the hand
Of impious tyranny!

SECOND INDIAN.

Let's to the castle!
And from that den of sacrilegious lust
Drag this proud Viceroy, while his angry guards
Yield him our easy prey.

SCENE VIII.

THE VICEROY, GARCIA *and* INDIANS.

THE VICEROY.

Spare your vain search,
Ye madding croud! behold that Viceroy here,
Whose power ye question, and whose blood ye thirst for!
Ungrateful people! can ye thus forget

From what dark depths of ruinous abasement
I raised your plundered race? there was a time,
When cruel rapine, with unbridled rage,
Preyed on your wasted wealth; when every voice,
That rose from India to unpitying Heaven,
Poured wild complaint, and bitter execration,
Against the insatiate sons of sordid Europe:
Those scenes of wretchedness our cares have changed
To the mild blessings of protected commerce,
And equal justice; yet your mutinous spirits
Insult the power, that saves you from perdition.

GARCIA.

Behold, my lord, how their misguided fury,
With just contrition, sinks to silent shame!

AN AGED INDIAN.

Hear! mighty Castro, hear the suppliant voice
Of age! forgive, and soothe thy troubled people!
They own thy mild dominion; they revere
Thy princely virtues: yet in wildest terror
Dread, lest insidious passion should betray thee
To trample on those laws, in whose defence
Thy steady virtue has so long upheld
The sword of justice, and the shield of mercy.
O! be their guardian still! in generous pity
Give, to the humblest prayers of duty, give
The captive child of that unhappy Bramin,
Whose terrors for his daughter torn away,
Piercing his soul, abridged his virtuous days!

THE VICEROY.

Thou good old man! thy mildness has more power
To move the heart of Castro, than the threats
Of fiercest war, when, in his wildest fury,

His loud voice sounds defiance and destruction.
My troubled subjects! just and gentle spirits!
I have obtained an empire in your hearts;
'Twas my ambition:——'tis my noblest pride;
Nor shall base passions tempt me now to forfeit
This best dominion: let the coward tyrant
Enshroud in falsehood's veil his crimes, his fears!
My heart shall own its errors, and retrieve them.

INDIAN.

Ye sons of India, hear your gracious lord!
He has no thought of impious violation.

THE VICEROY.

My fatal passion——I retain it still——
But deeply conscious, this afflictive love,
This cruel source of horrors unforeseen,
Must wound your dearest rights: those hallowed laws
Which I am bound to cherish, not invade,
Know that my soul has vowed to see no more
That lovely maid! whose fascinating charms
Tempt justice from its throne: ye now have heard
Our serious purpose; to confirm it farther
To you, my people! that unshaken honor
May be the guard of feebler continence,
I give this sacred pledge, your Sovereign's truth:
If now ye think us worthy of your trust,
Dismiss your every fear, disperse, and leave us!

INDIANS.

May Heaven long guard the just, the generous Castro!
He may command our treasures, and our blood.

THE VICEROY *and* GARCIA *come forward, and the Scene closes behind them.*

SCENE IX.

THE VICEROY, GARCIA.

GARCIA.

Blest be thy virtues! I regain my friend:
My heart could almost worship thee for this,
For well I know how dearly it has cost
Thy feeling soul; but honor shall repay thee,
And fame immortal be thy rich reward.

THE VICEROY.

Garcia my word is past: I mean to keep it——
My heart was formed to merit, and engage
The blessings of my people, not their curse:
But thou must be my feeble virtue's guard;
For should I look on that enchanting form,
The very firmest of these bright resolves
Would prove a lucid bubble, lost in air
The moment it is blown.

GARCIA.

Release your captives,
And time will make thro' every hour of life
This best of triumphs dearer to your heart!

THE VICEROY.

Go thou, dear Garcia, to the western tower!
I will not hazard e'en the slightest chance
To meet the eyes of that bewitching beauty;

Go, send her to Constantia! then my friend
Haste to rejoin me in Sylveyra's prison!
He is again the child of my adoption;
It shall be now my constant aim to banish
All trace of passion, and the name of rival.

GARCIA.

Blest be thy words! they give my age new life;
And I shall meet thee with the speed of youth.

(Exeunt.

SCENE X.—A PRISON.

CARASCO, *entering with* VELORA.

Curse on that busy and officious fool,
Who thus detained our steps!—we've lost an age;
Sylveyra should be here: what ho! my friend!

VELORA.

Good Heaven! he hears us not—they have destroyed him.

SYLVEYRA, *(entering.)*

It was an angel, or Velora's voice:
What joy! 'tis she herself——my life! my love!
What blessed chance——

CARASCO.

We have no time for words;
Each moment's of inestimable price:
I come to save ye both!—follow my steps,

And I will guide ye thro' a path unknown!

SYLVEYRA.

My true Carasco! faithful, generous friend!
Watch o'er this dearer portion of my life,
And haste to guide my loved Velora hence!
But for myself, a Soldier's tender fame
Forbids this secret flight: it wears too much
The cast of conscious guilt, and coward fear.

CARASCO.

These ill-timed scruples of mistaken honor
Are ruin to our hopes——

VELORA.

My own Sylveyra,
Thou seest Velora fatherless before thee,
Enabled only to sustain her being
By her fond hopes in thy protecting love;
Thou art her sole supporter, can thy heart
Desert so dear a duty, to obey
The fancied dictates of delusive honor?

SYLVEYRA.

Never! no never! all this heart is thine:
The tender accents of thy plaintive voice
Wake every fond emotion in my soul,
And teach me 'tis the glory of my life
To guard thy innocence thro' every peril——
Away! I will attend you:——yet my friend
A moment's pause! to shield us from pursuit
I'll bar yon avenue——do thou, Carasco,
Watch at the other grate, lest any noise
Awake suspicion in the court below!

CARASCO.

Be swift——delay's inevitable death——

SYLVEYRA, *withdraws at the end of the stage, and* CARASCO *remains attentive on the opposite side.*

VELORA.

How slow, how awful are these trying minutes
Of doubtful fate, that on their shadowy wings
In dread concealment bear the uncertain form
Of safety or perdition? Hear me Heaven!——

SCENE XI.

SYLVEYRA, *and* CARASCO *on opposite sides of the stage, while* VELORA *is absorbed in devotion.*

THE VICEROY, *(entering.)*

This resolution ne'er to see her more
Is medicine to my mind——ha! what art thou,
Bewitching form? art thou a mere illusion,
Or the fair sorceress herself, whose power
Seeks my perdition? let me clasp, and prove thee!
Thou dear delicious poison! O! thy touch
Drives hot delirium thro' my every vein.

VELORA.

Help me! Carasco, help!

CARASCO.

Turn, tyrant! turn
Base ravisher! and meet thy punishment!

THE VICEROY.

Audacious villain! it is mine to punish;
And thus I prove my power.

They fight.

CARASCO.

I spurn it thus—
Thank my kind stars I touch thee—'tis enough.

THE VICEROY.

Vile traitor! I despise thy nerveless arm,
And thus repay thy feeble wound with death.

(While they are engaged VELORA *flies.)*

CARASCO.

Curse thy strong arm! it has—it has destroyed me.

SYLVEYRA, *(rushing towards them.)*

I am too late! he falls! unhappy friend!

SCENE XII.

THE VICEROY, SYLVEYRA, CARASCO, GARCIA, *and* GUARDS.

In the moment CARASCO *is falling,* GARCIA *enters with* GUARDS, *and seizes the sword of* SYLVEYRA.

GARCIA.

What treachery is here? Castro, thou'rt wounded!

THE VICEROY.

My hurt is trifling: I have killed this traitor:
Guards bear Sylveyra to more close confinement!

SYLVEYRA.

Off! I will take a soldier's last farewell
Of this brave man, who dying thus pours forth
His generous blood in friendship's fatal cause.

THE VICEROY.

Away! they shall not interchange a word——

GUARDS *force off* SYLVEYRA.

CARASCO.

Insulting tyrant! thou mayst triumph now,
Thy triumph will be short.—It joys me yet

To see the lion circled in my toils,
Unconscious of his danger.—Sudden fate,
Invisible to thee, hangs o'er thy head:
This prospect of revenge, enough for me,
Gilds all the horrors of impending death,
E'en in these moments, while I feel his hand
Pressing most heavy—O! my life is past—
But thine, thine cannot last beyond—O Heaven!

(Dies.

GARCIA.

What mean these vile mysterious threats? I fear
Some dark, and deep conspiracy is formed
By those, who murmured at Sylveyra's fate:
My honored friend! haste! to thy bleeding wound
Get timely succour! while I search if aught
Of secret treason lurk within the walls.

THE VICEROY.

No, my kind Garcia, I will first go forth,
And make provision for the public safety.
Come then, my generous friend, dismiss thy fears!
Luxuriant ease, and beauty are alone
The bane of Castro: in the hour of danger
Thy piercing eye shall never find his soul
False to the hopes of animated friendship,
And idly distant from the goal of honor.

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—BEFORE THE CASTLE GATE.

CONSTANTIA, *and a* SENTINEL.

SENTINEL.

Hast thou not heard, thou canst not be admitted?
Then trouble us no more with fruitless clamour!

CONSTANTIA.

Unfeeling slave!—O! I am faint to death:
Yet hear me! yet admit me to the Viceroy!
And wretched as I seem, most rich reward
Shall make thee bless thy pity.

SENTINEL.

I have told thee,
I dare not on my life, the Viceroy's wounded
Even to death; and none must pass our gate
Without immediate order from the council.

CONSTANTIA.

Good Heaven! my Castro in the pangs of death!
Slave! I will pass.

SENTINEL.

Presumptuous woman! hence!
Or wait without, and wholesome solitude
Shall teach thee to be patient.

(Enters and shuts the Gate.

SCENE II.

CONSTANTIA, *(alone.)*

O! my husband!
My dying Castro! could thy closing eyes
Behold thy Isabel, that once loved name,
Thus by a scornful slave, forbid to pour
Her fond forgiveness on thy parting soul!
Mercy! what means this image of distraction?
'Tis my Velora, whose disordered features
Too strongly speak her frantic agony
Of terror and surprise.

SCENE III.

CONSTANTIA, VELORA.

VELORA, *(entering hastily)*

Now save thy son!
If pitying Heaven yet give thee time to save him!

CONSTANTIA.

Haste! guide me to him! tell me what the danger!
Where is Sylveyra? what must I attempt?

VELORA.

Alas! I know not; all is doubt and horror:
I left the tyrant in Sylveyra's prison
Fiercely encountering the brave Carasco;
And may that faithful friend with noble vengeance
Repay our various wrongs.

CONSTANTIA.

Where was Sylveyra?
Was his arm raised against the life of Castro?
Can it be possible that Heaven permitted
So horrible a conflict! can my son,
Have drowned his honors in a father's blood!

SCENE IV.

CONSTANTIA, VELORA, MOLINA.

MOLINA, *(entering hastily.)*

Away! my gentle friends, and let me guide ye
To some securer refuge, at these gates
Dire scenes of fierce contention may ensue!

CONSTANTIA.

Explain thy friendly fears!

MOLINA.

Carasco's slain,
But in base conflict, with a poisoned sword
Has wounded Castro: our unhappy Viceroy,
In keenest torture, hardly now sustains
A life expected every hour to close.

CONSTANTIA.

Mercy! I charge thee to that bed of death
Conduct my steps!—a sacred duty calls me—

MOLINA.

That cannot be: I am myself commanded
To quit the castle; all Sylveyra's friends
Are kept aloof with a suspicious fear:
Alas! unhappy parent! I must tell thee
Tidings yet more afflictive: at this moment
The council, jealous of endangered power,
And eager to revenge the Viceroy's fate
Is met to search, how far Sylveyra's wrongs
Made him the accomplice of this dark assassin:
But we acquainted with his noble nature——

VELORA.

Shame on the base ingratitude, that wounds
His spotless virtue with its vile suspicion!

CONSTANTIA.

O horror! horror! this unhappy father
Will in the blind, convulsive pangs of death
Assassinate his child! and call it justice:
Thou good Molina! think not that affliction
Has driven all sense from this disordered brain,
While I inform thee, that in me thou seest
The wife, the innocent, the injured wife

Of thy deluded, dear, expiring master,
Who thinks his poor deserted Isabel
Now mould'ring in her grave, nor yet suspects
That brave Sylveyra is the son he lost.

VELORA.

The son of Castro! thou his injured wife!

MOLINA.

Amazement! art thou that lamented victim
Of cruel jealousy?

CONSTANTIA.

Stay not to question
My wondrous fate! a moment's pause is worse
Than death's worst pang: it may destroy a life
Far dearer than my own: my slandered son!
Fly! fly to save him!

MOLINA.

Would I had heard
This tale, before the terrors of the council
Shut me from out these walls!—'tis now too late.

VELORA.

Too late! O mercy has their coward fear
Condemned his virtue? has the cruel Viceroy
Forced them——

CONSTANTIA.

Distraction! he has killed his child!
I see the father stained with filial blood!
O unexampled crime!

MOLINA.

Maternal love,

Too keenly sensible, destroys thy reason :
But calm its frantic fears—thy son yet lives :
Yet interposing Heaven——

CONSTANTIA.

May I believe thee ?
Save me from madness ! swear they have not killed him !

MOLINA.

Be comforted, fond parent ! by my life
He lives—yet friendship trembles at his danger :
The timid council, who well know thy son
The army's idol, jealous and alarmed,
By every caution to prevent his rescue,
Exclude us from the castle ; if we plead
Thy story for admission, they will call it
A sudden artifice to save thy son——

CONSTANTIA.

O ! for a voice of thunder to proclaim
The sacred truth ! but let us force our passage
Thro' these inhuman guards ! what can they more
Than wound this wretched frame ? and let them bathe
Their sabres in my blood, if they but leave
My mangled limbs the power to crawl towards him,
Shrieks of maternal terror shall detain
The parting soul of this unconscious father,
And bid him save his unoffending child.

MOLINA.

One chance remains :—to sue for entrance here
Would be to waste inestimable minutes ;
But at the gate, by which I left the castle,
Some sentinels are placed, much bound to me
By various services ; perchance their spirit

Will bravely venture on this breach of orders :
Haste we to prove it !

VELORA.

Come ! our suppliant tears
Shall melt the sternest——

CONSTANTIA.

Now, relenting Heaven !
Now shew thy mercy to an injured mother !

(*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

GARCIA, *with a Council of* OFFICERS.

FIRST OFFICER.

My valiant friends ! the blazing sun is set,
Whose vital energy gave life and splendor
To Lusitanian glory :—mighty Castro,
With pain exhausted, sinks in heavy slumber,
That much, 'tis feared, must terminate in death :
Our grief and duty to as brave a leader
As ever soldier followed to the field,
The voice of justice, and the public safety,
All loudly call for signal, speedy vengeance
On the surviving traitor, deeply joined
In guilty compact with the base Carasco.

GARCIA.

Behold the victim you demand !

SCENE VI.

GARCIA *and* COUNCIL; SYLVEYRA, *(guarded.)*

GARCIA.

My duty
To our lamented chief, my murdered friend,
Bids me pronounce a painful accusation:
That done, I leave it to the council's wisdom
To judge his answer, and decide his fate.
Unhappy youth! it is with grief I charge thee
With having stained thy honors, nobly won,
By dark conspiracy, by meanly joining
In basest vengeance with a vile assassin.

SYLVEYRA.

O! Garcia, wrong not by so base a name
A gallant, generous, and departed soldier,
Lavish of life in friendship's sacred cause!
Would I alone had met the oppressive arm
Of this proud ravisher! what! tho' I owed him
Obedience as a subject! nobler duties
More loudly called me as a man to guard
That injured innocence, and plaintive beauty,
Which his fierce rage had seized for violation.

GARCIA.

Thou lost young man! whose fairer dawn of life
Gave the false promise of progressive virtue,
I quit the little hope, my heart had formed
To find thee guiltless, while I hear thee thus,

With the bold insolence of vice, defend
The villain, who destroyed his sovereign's life
By the base wound of an envenomed sword.

SYLVEYRA.

By an envenomed sword! can this be true?

GARCIA.

The dying ruffian, with mysterious triumph,
Joyed in his crime.

SYLVEYRA.

Could friendship be the mask
Of blackest vengeance?

GARCIA.

When I seized thy sword
In the confusion of that fatal conflict
It seemed, in aid of the accurst assassin,
To point its murd'rous aim at Castro's heart.

SYLVEYRA.

Think not an abject love of life can lead me
To clear my innocence!—I know too well
The tyrant's jealousy, which e'en in death
Will rage, to rob me of the only treasure,
That makes life lovely in Sylveyra's eyes.
But just attention to my wounded honor
Bids me proclaim, my sword was only drawn
To interrupt their conflict.

GARCIA.

Couldst thou prove
That generous purpose, thy untainted honor
Would, with the force of the meridian beam,

Start from this passing cloud: but, hapless youth!
The only witness that perchance might clear
Thy sullied fame, is that departing hero,
Whose pale lips, now we strongly fear, have closed
To speak no more; and for myself, I grieve,
While painful truth impels me to repeat,
That if my eye deceived me not, thy sword
Was basely levelled at his sacred life.

FIRST OFFICER.

Now Garcia, thou has paid thy debt to friendship;
Our duty points to justice.——

A MESSENGER, *(entering.)*

Suspend your resolution, valiant chiefs!
It is the Viceroy's will:—he haply gains
Some little portion of reviving strength,
And has commanded his attendant train
To bear him to the council, that his sentence——
But see! his mighty mind, tho' worn with torture,
Anticipates my message——

SCENE VII.

GARCIA *and* COUNCIL, SYLVEYRA, THE VICEROY.

THE VICEROY, *(brought in.)*

Gently! friends,
All motion throws a sickly langour o'er me,
And robs my spirit of collected thought—
Dear Garcia, I am faint—whene'er I die,

Thou art my successor: I would not wish
To place dominion in a nobler hand.

GARCIA.

That faithful hand shall resolutely guide
The sword of justice to avenge—

THE VICEROY.

Ah! no!
I charge thee no! I heard thy dangerous error;
Thou hast believed the innocent Sylveyra
The accomplice of a ruffian: but I come,
With pain collecting all the shattered powers
Of my dissolving frame, to prove his truth;
To witness, that his generous arm was raised
Not to destroy, but guard the ungrateful master,
Who basely wronged him.

GARCIA.

Blest be thy firm soul,
Thou dear lamented friend, which timely clears
My dread mistake, and saves blind zeal from staining
The sword of eager justice, with the blood
Of slandered virtue.

THE VICEROY.

Gallant, injured youth!
Come near me! for the friendly hand of death
Has rent asunder that dark veil of passion,
Which hid thy virtues from my blinded heart!
Give me thy hand? before my fatal frenzy
I loved thee as my son: 'twas I who first
Broke that dear bond.

SYLVEYRA.

Thou kind, exalted spirit!

Still mayst thou live, and be again my father!

THE VICEROY.

No! generous youth! my feverish dream of life
Is hastening to its close: but O! my friends,
Be it related to our royal master,
That Castro owned, with his expiring lips,
How deeply he had wronged the brave Sylveyra;
And dying, begged, it might be told his king,
That in his service he will never find
A valiant youth of fairer expectation.

SYLVEYRA.

O unexampled nobleness of nature!
It rends my heart:—O! that my worthless life—

SCENE VIII.

THE VICEROY, GARCIA, SYLVEYRA, CONSTANTIA, *&c.*

CONSTANTIA,

(throwing herself before the Viceroy.)

Save him! O save him, Castro! 'tis thy son!
The son of Isabel! thy injured wife!
Behold her proud heart prostrate at thy feet!

THE VICEROY.

Good Heaven! thy piercing accents have convulsed
All my weak springs of life—look up! O shew me
Thy features, thou! that hast assumed a name,

Whose very sound is torture to my soul!
Thou blessed form! my Isabel herself!
My innocent, my living Isabel!
Enough—ye powers of mercy! 'tis enough—
I fain would bless thee—but—

(Faints.

CONSTANTIA.

Alas! he dies!—
Wretch that I am! my blind precipitate haste
Has cruelly abridged the few short minutes
Of his lost life.—Thou dear, unhappy Castro!

GARCIA.

Despair not, gentle lady! this surprise
O'erpowers enfeebled nature; but I see
Returning life—it flushes on his cheek—

(To the Council.)

My honored friends, your presence may distress
His wounded spirit; then awhile retire!
And when he gains some slight return of strength,
I will myself inform you of his wishes—

(the Officers withdraw.

THE VICEROY.

Where art thou, blessed spirit! tell me where!
I thought my Isabel informed my soul,
She was not murder'd by the cruel Castro—
Now my lost love! I hold thee once again:
Speak to me! let thy soft angelic voice,
If thou indeed art Isabel, disperse
This darkness of my soul, that makes me fear
A blessing, so beyond the reach of hope,

Is but the mockery of mere delirium.

CONSTANTIA.

Thy Isabel yet lives: O! could her love
Yet save thy dearer life!

THE VICEROY.

Kind angel! spare,
Spare that vain thought! the hand of righteous Heaven
Has marked my hour of death—I feel it near;
But thus to know, that I have not destroyed
Thy innocence; to fold thee thus,
And fondly resting my repentant spirit
On the kind softness of thy tender bosom;
To breathe my last in thy forgiving arms
Is worth long centuries of guilty life——
But haste to tell me all thy wondrous fate.

CONSTANTIA.

If, in these moments of reviving love,
I must again resign thee, yet my Castro!
Yet in thy parting soul let me awaken
The blest emotions of paternal joy.
Let Isabel to thy embraces give
A son most worthy of thy honored name!
This injured youth, this brave accomplished hero,
Formed by thy care, and child of thy adoption,
Thy loved Sylveyra, is thy real son.

THE VICEROY.

Amazement! transport! Heaven my son restored!
Come let me press thee with my dying hand!
And pouring penitent tears into thy bosom
Thus from thy pure heart wash the painful record
Of all thy father's cruelty and guilt.

SYLVEYRA.

His worth, his kindness live for ever there

THE VICEROY.

Dear Garcia, seek that injured excellence
The sweet Velora—I have learnt the story
Of their chaste loves, and her concealed attachment
To our pure faith: it is by her alone,
That I can make atonement to their virtues.

(Exit Garcia.

Tell me, my Isabel, and haste to tell me,
How gracious providence has been thy shield!

CONSTANTIA.

Thou know'st that far from Lisbon, and my father,
Within my sister's castle, 'twas my hope
To hide the offspring of our secret marriage;
There first I learnt, that frantic jealousy
Impelled thee to desert thy injured wife—

THE VICEROY.

That cruel jealousy was raised to madness
By the curst arts of a defeated rival.

CONSTANTIA.

The power of innocence, and pride of virtue,
With the pure spirit of maternal love,
Sustained my wounded heart: my generous sister
Contrived the artful tale which haply led
My friends, my father, and e'en thee to think me
Sunk in the wished asylum of the tomb:
So I was free to watch, with ceaseless care,
The precious fruit of thy ill-fated love—

THE VICEROY.

Thou miracle of pure maternal virtue!
O let me thank thee with these bursting tears
Of fondest admiration!

CONSTANTIA.

When the mind
Of my sweet boy first glowed with young ambition,
It chanced thy valour raised thee to this sphere:
I then resolved beneath a borrowed name,
To visit India, with a hope to see
Thy unsuspected son by youthful merit
Attract thy notice: this, my dearest aim,
To brave Sylveyra, thy departed friend,
I first unfolded—as his widowed sister,
He sheltered me with well-devised concealment:
That virtuous hero aided all my views
With noblest zeal, and to thy wakened love
Meant to restore us, when the afflictive chance
Of battle robbed us of his kind support.

THE VICEROY.

My generous friend! I well remember all
His care to fix in my unconscious heart
The virtues of my child—Oh! Isabel,
To what long years of suffering has my frenzy
Reduced thy spotless heart! and canst thou pardon—

SCENE IX.

THE VICEROY, CONSTANTIA, SYLVEYRA, GARCIA, VELORA.

THE VICEROY.

And see another innocent, whom Castro
Has basely tortured by injurious passion!
O! Heaven, the sense of all your wrongs united
O'erwhelms my fainting spirit.

CONSTANTIA.

Gracious Heaven,
Relieve this anguish of his wounded soul.

THE VICEROY.

My lovely daughter, to this noble youth
Now let me, as a gift of expiation,
Present thy purity! no! no! my children!
Ye must not kneel: to me alone belongs
Humiliation; and my prostrate soul
Bends to that innocence, which I have wronged,
And may your generous hearts forget how deeply,
Nor let your hate attend me to the grave.

SYLVEYRA.

My honored father, could our love preserve thee!

THE VICEROY.

'Tis death alone can expiate my offences,
And his dark shades are gathering fast around me,

I yet, my son, in these affecting moments,
Feel a fond pride in thy superior virtue:
And may that virtue, may thy chaste affections
Make thy pure days as full of peace and joy,
As mine have been of turbulence and horror!
Console thy peerless mother! let thy kindness
Repay, if possible, my cruelty!
And O! forever make this best of friends
The model of thy life! my faithful Garcia!
Thy friendship is the noblest legacy,
That I can leave these most beloved of beings!
My Isabel! where art thou? my dim eyes
Have lost thee, and are strained in vain to find
The dearest object of their failing sight—
With my last breath I bless thee—O farewell!
Nor think too hardly of a heart, which still
Doats on thy excellence! O! mercy Heaven!

(Dies.

GARCIA.

Farewell, great spirit! formed to grace the earth
With all the brightest qualities of man!
O'er life's rough ocean 'twas thy wish to steer
The course of steady virtue; but the storms
Of passion drove thee from thy destined way:
May all thy gallant deeds, and they were many,
Be justly blazoned in the tints of glory!
And be thy frailties buried in the grave!
Or but remembered with a kind concern,
To teach misguided man, that misery
Haunts all the hasty steps of lawless passion;
While gentler, just affections only bring
Unclouded peace, and purity of joy!

THE

HEROINE OF CAMBRIA:

A TRAGEDY.

Hic furor, hic rabies, hic sunt tua crimina, Cæsar.
— — — cladis tamen hujus habemus
Vindictam.

LUCAN: LIB: VII.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

KING EDWARD THE FIRST.
CLYFFORD, *Nephew to the King.*
MORTIMER.
LLANDORVIN, *the Bard.*

QUEEN ELEANOR.
GWENDYLEN, *the Daughter of Llandorvin.*

SCENE—WALES.

A Castle at the foot of Snowdon, and different spots on the Mountain.

THE

HEROINE OF CAMBRIA:

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A HALL IN AN ANCIENT CASTLE.

KING EDWARD, *and* ATTENDANTS.

KING EDWARD.

Tell me no more our conquest is complete!
All we have gained is but a trembling trophy,
Which oft as Snowdon, from its secret caves,
Pours forth these vagrants of rebellious song,
Shakes at the echo of a minstrel's voice.
Our victories yet want the bloody seal,
That gives stability to power. I wait
In anxious indignation, till I hear,
That these prime sources of seditious fury,
These scoffers at our sway,—the captive bards,
Are silenced all by death.

SCENE II.

KING EDWARD, CLYFFORD, *and* ATTENDANTS.

KIND EDWARD.

Well! my young soldier,
Hast thou, as I enjoined thee, seen these miscreants,
Who to their harps breathed anarchy and carnage,
Resign their forfeit lives?

CLYFFORD.

Yes! my dread liege,
I have indeed beheld——shield, shield me, Heaven,
From such another spectacle!

KING EDWARD.

Weak boy!
What, choaked with tears! art thou the martial youth,
Whom, for thy father's sake, tho' marriage failed
To give the stamp of honor to thy birth,
I fondly fostered as a future hero?

CLYFFORD.

If I offend, whom I would die to serve,
Pray you, my liege, assign me any torture,
Rather than your reproach!

KING EDWARD.

Then be corrected!
Thy too indulgent sire, the gentle Edmund

Would lead thee, by his homilies on peace,
To be an anchorite:—thy king, my Clyfford,
Must steel thy sinews to the sterner duties
Of discord-quelling power.—But to thy story!
What! did these fierce offenders die so bravely,
Thou couldst have wished their pardon?

CLYFFORD.

From my soul—
O royal Edward! think me not ungrateful
For all thy lavish bounty to my youth,
If when I saw these victims of thy wrath
Perish, amid the groans of suffering thousands,
I wished thy mercy——

KING EDWARD.

Poor, deluded stripling!
These wild enthusiasts have ensnared thy fancy;
And foolish pity for the expiring traitors
Has made thee half a rebel.

CLYFFORD.

No! my liege,
I pitied not the dying: their demeanour
Might waken envy, but not weak compassion:
They died as freedom's martyrs—and they said
The benedictions of their bleeding country
Would waft to Heaven their unrepining spirits.
It was the anguish of their mourning kindred
That pierced my soul——it seemed, that in their death
The vital spirit of their nation perished.

KING EDWARD.

There, Clyfford, thy unconscious lips applaud
The wisdom of severity. The arm,

That strikes against us in the field of war,
Is not so much an object of our fear,
As that more potent voice, which, in the scene
Of festive tumult, arrogantly spreads
Contagious enmity against our rule,
And mutinous defiance. These wild tribes
Of hardy mountaineers will soon become
The docile vassals of our sovereign pleasure,
When their presumptuous rhapsodists no more
Exist, to fire the fascinated people
To frantic insurrection. Quiet now
May guard and fertilize our new domain,
Since these rebellious, these strife-kindling bards
Are all extirpated.

CLYFFORD.

Not all my liege.

KING EDWARD.

What! are we disobeyed? is not our sentence
Justly fulfilled on all the trait'rous tribe?

CLYFFORD.

Of the devoted band, one hoary chief,
Pre-eminent in genius and renown,
The famed Llandorvin, by a pious fraud,
That nature framed to save him, has eluded
His watchful guard, and 'scaped the general doom,
Which sunk to day in everlasting silence
All the lost brothers of his art.

KING EDWARD.

Escaped!
He shall not foil my power——by Salem's cross
Not all the deep recesses of their mountains

Shall screen this fugitive, and whosoe'er
Has stolen the victim from insulted justice,
Shall in atonement share his future death.

CLYFFORD.

Recal that oath!—O noble minded Edward!
For it involves a cruelty, thy nature
Could never execute. Our glorious sovereign,
The pride of Christendom! bears not a sword
To strike at female youth, and filial duty.

KING EDWARD.

What canst thou mean?

CLYFFORD.

The culprit is a daughter:
Of radiant beauty; and, as fame reports,
Endowed with all the mental energy,
That made her sire the darling of his nation.

KING EDWARD.

Bribed she our guard?—Perdition on the traitors!

CLYFFORD.

No! on my life my liege the men are faithful.
This damsel with prevailing supplication
(A savage must have granted her request)
Begged but to pass within her father's prison
The night preceding his appointed death.
How she effected his escape, we know not;
But when the morning came, and all the victims
Were summoned to their fate, the fearless maiden
Boasted, her sire was free; and nobly added
To seal his freedom, if her blood might seal it,
She would exult to meet th' impending doom,

From which she had redeemed him.

KING EDWARD.

Mark! thou novice
In the high task to govern wayward rebels,
Mark! how these fierce enthusiasts of the harp
Subvert all power! How with outrageous fury
They spurn authority, and smile at death.
This artful traitress may have severed from us
The hearts of half our soldiery. Inform me
How they received this daring subterfuge!

CLYFFORD.

As men, my liege, who tho' inured to scenes,
Where lawless war oft leads to wildest outrage,
Yet feel the force of beauty, and of nature.
They praised the noble girl, exclaimed "God bless her,"
And would have sent her crowned with garlands home,
But that stern Mortimer, whose rigid spirit
Can ne'er forgive her countrymen the havoc,
They spread so frequent o'er his neighbouring lands,
Seized on the maid, and resolutely vowed
He would conduct her to your royal presence,
As hostage for her father's peaceful conduct.

KING EDWARD.

He judges better than thy simple youth;
And knows the caution, that our state requires.

SCENE III.

KING EDWARD, CLYFFORD, MORTIMER, GWENDYLEN.

MORTIMER.

Behold, my liege—but from your gallant kinsman
You are apprized of all, I would relate,
Touching this fair delinquent, whom my duty
Brings to attend the order of your highness.

KING EDWARD.

My faithful Mortimer! we ever find thee
Intelligent and active in our service.
Fair stranger! thy offence has nature's plea:
We shall not therefore, as our state might warrant,
Weigh it, as treason to our sovereignty.
Think us thy friend! and know we mean to place thee
In the protection of our gentle queen,
Whose fair retinue, and well ordered court,
Form an asylum for thy youth and beauty.
There wilt thou learn, what thy distracted country
Ought to have learnt, a grateful just obedience;
Nor rashly mingling in rebellious broils
Partake thy father's crimes.

GWENDYLEN.

My father's crimes!
O royal Edward, do not let the pride
Of recent conquest make thee arrogate
What God denies himself; the power to alter

Th'. eternal sacred bounds of good and evil.
My father's life may be, as once it seemed,
Thy victim: but his virtue, and his fame
Are far beyond the reach of thy attaint;
And, like his firm unspotted soul, immortal.

KING EDWARD.

So young! and so presumptuous! thy apt childhood
Has caught the ravings of licentious freedom:
But softer studies, and submissive manners
More suit thy sex and age.

GWENDYLEN.

Your pardon, sir!
My brief, and artless life has only been
One plain continued lesson in the school,
The heart-improving school of true submission,
Where quick obedience is the happy offspring
Of love, and veneration.

KING EDWARD.

Has thy father,
Plunged in the storm of dark hostility,
That drowns domestic joy, has he found leisure
To tutor thy fond infancy; and grow
By the alluring powers of mild instruction
The idol of his child?

GWENDYLEN.

If I, my lord,
As partial friends have said, if I appear
Of spirit riper, than my youth might promise,
I owe it to his rare paternal bounty;
Who from my cradle, with incessant fondness
Watched o'er the dawn of reason in my soul,

And to my young enchanted mind displayed
The lustre of his own.—O mighty Edward!
Couldst thou but feel a moment, what my heart
Has felt for years——the pure benignant splendor
Of that rich mind, where fancy's fervid powers
Blaze, but as solar fire, to guide the world,
Thou wouldst not wonder, that I thus exult
To draw my being from so bright a source,
And vindicate the glory of my father.

KING EDWARD.

My young, and fair enthusiast, I esteem
Thy filial pride, good children make good subjects.
Thy spirit pleases, and perchance may lead me
To be thy father's friend: but we must teach him
To court our mercy, not insult our power.
Wait till the queen, youth's patroness! appears
To take thee to her charge. Come, Mortimer,
Receive our private orders!

(Exit with Mortimer.

SCENE IV.

GWENDYLEN, CLYFFORD.

CLYFFORD.

Lovely, sequestered fair! whose native graces
Surpass, what I have seen, of finished beauty!
I gaze upon thee with delight, and anguish:
The admiration, that thy charms inspire,

Is turned to torture by the fears I feel
Of ills, that threaten thee, which yet thou know'st not.

GWENDYLEN.

Have they surprised my father? Noble youth!
If thou indeed hast pity for our wrongs,
Rack not my soul with ignorance and terror!

CLYFFORD.

No lovely Gwendylen! thy father yet
Retains the liberty, thy virtue gave him.

GWENDYLEN.

Blest be the voice, which gives me that assurance!
It has disolved the icy bonds, that seemed
To rob my heart of motion. In his safety
I live again; and feeling but for him,
Smile at adversity, whose baffled force
Falls on myself alone.

CLYFFORD.

Thou sweet perfection!
That Heaven should form thee for a fate so cruel!
E'en now thou seem'st to my afflicted sense
Like a lost infant, seeing not its peril,
Wandering with sightless eyes in active slumber
Upon a turret's roof:—another step
Is sure destruction. How! how shall I save thee?

GWENDYLEN.

What means thy kind inquietude? Is Edward
So ruthless, as to thirst for blood like mine?
Nay, if he is, lament not, generous Clyfford!
I have not passed my days with such a father,
Untaught in life's great lesson, how to die!

CLYFFORD.

No! not thy blood! O thou enchanting fair one!
Thy beauty, and thy perils will distract
My troubled brain, and turn me to a traitor
Against th' imperial patron of my youth.
My heart recoils, when I attempt to speak
Against the bounteous Edward, but his rage
To crush all opposition to his sway
In this devoted country, may induce him—
No! no! I am to blame—his noble nature—
I will not shew thee that detested image,
Which my o'er-anxious fancy had created,

GWENDYLEN.

My young ingenuous friend! I see, and honor
The struggle in thy soul between just pity
To the sunk victims of abhorred oppression,
And fond attachment to an artful tyrant,
Allied to thee in blood, but not in virtue.

CLYFFORD.

If thus thou think'st of Edward, I may banish
My groundless dread, lest his imperial offers
Of splendid favour might induce thy candor
To call thy wand'ring father to our court;
And then behold him in some fatal season,
When stern necessity of state might prompt
To faithless rigor——but the King returns:
Treasure my caution in thy tender bosom!
And know me for thy friend in fate's worst hour.

SCENE V.

GWENDYLEN, CLYFFORD, KING EDWARD, MORTIMER.

KING EDWARD.

Come, my fair ward; to shew you, that we honor
A daughter's courage, we return in person
To lead you to our Queen. To all your race
Our purposes are kind: we freely grant
Your father's forfeit life. Make him our friend.
We mean to place you in our realm of England,
Where both shall flourish in our royal favor.

GWENDYLEN.

My lord, in childhood, I was taught a fable,
Touching the lion's court.

KING EDWARD.

Now, on my soul,
This girl is passing shrewd; but hear me, damsel!
Wake not the lion's wrath! you know my power
Can sweep this hoary fugitive from earth:
Would you provoke my rigor? be advised!
Embrace my proffered bounty, and confide
His safety to your King!

GWENDYLEN.

I will confide it
But to the King, whose word was never broken
The King of Kings! If it is Heaven's decree,

That he must perish, never shall his daughter
Be lured by false ambition to betray him.

KING EDWARD.

Betray him! say'st thou? is it to betray
An outcast, lurking in wild woods and caverns,
To call him from despair? perhaps from death,
To the bright refuge of a monarch's favor?

GWENDYLEN.

Insidious tyrant! talk not of thy favor!
'Twas this ensnared the princes of our land,
And made the fair face of our bleeding country
A scene of ruin, horrible to think of,
And to behold, distracting. While my thoughts
Exulted in the rescue of my father,
My nation's woes seemed banished from my mind:
But now, that I survey thy angry visage,
My country's evil genius glares upon me:
Thy cruelty, thy crimes, in all their horror,
Remorseless Edward! rush upon my brain,
And all my father's virtues fire my soul
With just and brave contempt of barb'rous power.

KING EDWARD.

Art thou so frantic in thy enmity,
That grace and clemency are lost upon thee?
Thou female abstract of thy nation's fury!
Then salutary rigor must instruct thee
Not to insult our bounty. Mortimer!
Take thou the charge of this intractable!
Tame the young zealot with the due correction
Of strict imprisonment, and solitude,
To teach her better thoughts; while we, my Clyfford,

Inform the Queen, that her intended charge
Is found unworthy of her kind acceptance.

(Exit with Clyfford.

SCENE VI.

GWENDYLEN, MORTIMER.

MORTIMER.

Come! my fair captive, tho' you were to blame
To irritate the King, who meant you kindness,
While I confine, I yet must pity you.

GWENDYLEN.

If thou, our most inveterate foe! hast pity,
Bestow it on th' oppressor! not th' opprest!
The one, has men, and demons for his vassals;
The other, angels for her friends. Just Heaven!
If, as I now most fondly would surmise,
By noble sufferance I may avert
Evil impending o'er my father's head,
I will not shrink, howe'er stern fate may try me;
But with that filial love, which still has been
The ruling passion of my ardent soul,
Exult to suffer for so dear a purpose.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A ruined Abbey by Moonlight with a subterraneous Passage to a sepulchral vault.

LLANDORVIN, *(rising from the sepulchre.)*

The bloodhounds, that have tracked me to this ruin,
Are foiled, and have rushed forward: Blest be you,
Ye sainted tenants of these sepulchres!
Who grant my injured age that kind protection,
The living dare not give; since my oppressors
Proclaim it death to screen their flying victim.
O my lost friends! dear brothers of my art!
You dying have ennobled basest death:
Arm me with courage for my harder task,
To bear the wretchedness of outcast life

In scenes, that wake regret at every step!
O Gwendylen! my dear angelic daughter!
How painful is the proof of love I give thee
To live at thy entreaty! yet sweet angel
Thy dictates are divine. I feel, as thou dost,
It is Llandorvin's duty still to cherish
Existence, tho' debased, while he can hope
His lips may breathe into the fainting frame
Of our racked country, that suspended spirit
Of manly freedom, which the ruthless Edward
Dreams, in his pride, to have suppressed for ever.
But hark! the friendly stillness of the night,
Enabling me to hear a foot approaching,
Bids me again within my sacred covert
Elude my keen pursuers.

(He descends into the sepulchre.

SCENE II.

CLYFFORD.

I have misled the saguinary troop,
That with a sportive rancour, hunt as prey
An injured, brave old man; and if this ruin,
As I surmise, conceals him—Ha! what form
Glides, like a shadowy phantom of the night
Beneath yon open grove, seeming, with steps
Quick and irregular to fear, and shun me?
But that I know her obstinately held
In such severe captivity, that love
And pity could not force her prison door,

I should believe, sweet Gwendylen herself
Had braved the perils of the night, to aid
Her wand'ring sire. Perhaps some kindred fair one
Assumes that angel's office. Hallowed shades!
Make me invisible! and let me learn
Why, at a time to freeze the female heart,
A woman wanders round these mould'ring tombs!

(Clyfford conceals himself.

SCENE III.

After a short pause, GWENDYLEN *enters with circumspection.*

'Twas but the dark illusion of my fears:
O guilt! what terror and dismay must haunt
Each step of thine, if I, sustained and guided
By filial piety, yet start at shadows,
And halt in my good purpose! but at last
I've reached the sacred sepulchre, that if
My bold and kind informer may be trusted,
Shall at my voice unfold its doors of darkness,
And give my living father to my arms.
Here is the subterraneous pass, by which
I am directed to descend: its gloom,
And icy dampness chill my trembling bosom:
Base terrors hence! I will descend! not all
The powers of darkness should by terror tempt me
To leave a father, so revered and loved,
To die unsuccoured in these dreary charnels.
Dear duty, be my guide!

SCENE IV.

GWENDYLEN, CLYFFORD.

CLYFFORD.

Stay! Gwendylen,
A moment stay! thou noblest, loveliest being,
That Heaven e'er formed, in the benignant purpose
To shew how pow'rful are the blended charms
Of peerless beauty, and consummate virtue.

GWENDYLEN,

Courage! my soul! that surely is the voice
Of gentle Clyfford! he will not betray
The wretched, whom his virtue wished to save,

CLYFFORD.

Betray thee! rather to a thousand perils
Would I expose my baser life, than bring
The least increase of danger upon thee,
Or the dear object of thy duteous care;
Whom at this secret hour, as I believed thee
Kept from him by vile bonds, I sought to comfort
With aid unlooked for from an English hand.

GWENDYLEN.

My heart would say, how much it is thy debtor,
But feels its obligations far outweigh
My little store of words. Let me then lead thee,
To where with nobler voice, just gratitude

May duly thank thee in my father's form.

CLYFFORD.

Yet stay, dear Gwendylen! I pray thee tell me
What power celestial burst thy prison doors,
Where I in vain have sued to gain admittance,
Enabling thee in this heart-trying service
To prove thy matchless fortitude and love.

GWENDYLEN.

I will not shun thy converse, when I know
My father is secure. But till I gain
Assurance of his safety, every pause
That keeps me from him, puts my soul to torture.
If he yet lives, this passage will conduct us
Within his earthy refuge. Follow me!

CLYFFORD.

Dear heroine of tenderness! 'tis mine
To be thy leader here. In these damp caverns,
These mould'ring passes to forgotten dust;
Some ravenous beast, that preys upon the dead,
Or poisonous reptile in its dark recess,
May lurk to wound thy foot; by whose pure touch
The consecrated earth would feel more hallowed,
Had it my awful sense of thy perfections.
I'll first explore the darkness, and return
To be thy guide.

GWENDYLEN.

No! I have no such fears,
Thy King's barbarity has made us suffer
To such excess, that to a Cambrian mind
All other pests of earth have lost their terror.
Forgive me generous Clyfford! that I cannot

Forget the cruel spirit of thy sovereign!
Come, English as thou art! my father's soul
Has oft exulted with magnanimous praise
To celebrate the virtues of a foe,
And turn base enmity to noble friendship.

CLYFFORD.

I am no son of England, if to be so
Must make me hateful in his sight, or yours:
But leading such a daughter to his bosom
My proud heart tells me, I may share his blessing.
The vault is utter darkness: I conjure you
Lean on my arm.

GWENDYLEN.

O! if this hallowed shelter
Gives my safe father to my longing arms;
This will indeed be passing thro' the grave,
To reach the blessed light of heavenly joy.

(They descend.

SCENE V.

THE INSIDE OF AN ANCIENT SEPULCHRE.

LLANDORVIN.

(reclining against a broken Monument with a lamp.)

When the soul sickens at the bloody scenes
Of barbarous outrage, that deform the world,

How sweetly peaceful is the silent tomb!
Yet such is the base fury of our foes,
That senseless havoc even here has raged
Against the honoured dead. Ye shattered forms
Of warriors, who of old for freedom fought,
How gladly would my injured age become
Insensible as you to savage wrongs,
But that my darling child—again my fancy
Would mock me with the sound of her approach.
It is the hour! but she perchance——Again
The crumbling earth tells me some foot is near.
How fondly eager are my lips to hail
The expected daughter; and yet dare not call her
Till I can catch her voice. O righteous Heaven!
Delude not my fond senses, that persuade me
I may distinguish in some distant sounds
The utterance of my child.

GWENDYLEN, *(behind the scene.)*

Have I a father?
'Tis Gwendylen who calls.

LLANDORVIN.

My child! my child!

SCENE VI.

LLANDORVIN, GWENDYLEN, CLYFFORD.

GWENDYLEN.

He lives! he lives to bless me for his life!

LLANDORVIN.

The exulting angel, who shall call to glory
The spirits of the just, can never prove
A visitant more dear to raptured saints,
Awakened from the slumber of the grave,
Than thou art to thy father.

CLYFFORD.

Thou blest sire,
Allow a stranger, whose unhardened heart
Bled for thy wrongs, to share at this dear moment
Thy tears of hallowed extacy!

LLANDORVIN.

Thy accent,
Ingenuous youth, informs me thou art English:
A name to wake hostility, and hate
In every Cambrian heart! but gracious nature
On thy fair brow has written characters,
That lead to confidence, if not to friendship.
If, as my mind conjectures, generous pity
Has prompted thee to guard this damsel, passing
Thro' nightly perils to relieve her father,
Thou wilt not deem that father's benediction,
(All his base foes have left him to bestow)
A worthless recompense of care so noble.

CLYFFORD.

My heart will prize it as a richer treasure,
Than royalty can give. But, my kind father,
O let me ever hail by that dear name,
The man I venerate with filial ardour!
Tho' I confess I covet thy esteem
Beyond the praise of princes, let me not
Meanly attempt to win it by a semblance

Of merit, not my own! I came not hither
Guarding your lovely daughter: to herself,
To the firm virtues of her tender heart
Solely you owe this interview of transport.

LLANDORVIN.

Tell me, my child!——

GWENDYLEN.

O graceful modesty!
How sweet thou shewest in a princely patron,
Who, giving all, believes he nothing gives!
But for the caution of this noble youth,
Thy Gwendylen, my father, might again
Have put thy rescued life within the power
Of the remorseless Edward.

CLYFFORD.

Hate me not,
Thou injured veteran of purest glory!
In hearing, I am bound by strongest ties
To thy detested foe, the mighty Edward!
Trained by his bounty, partial to his virtues,
Yet by the radiance of his power unblinded,
I wish that high imperial spirit tempered
With all the mildness of my gentle sire,
His more pacific brother.

LLANDORVIN.

Gracious Heaven!
Art thou, engaging youth, art thou the son
Of that loved prince, that real king uncrowned,
Who, scorning the vile vassalage of fear,
Reigns by beneficence o'er grateful hearts.

CLYFFORD.

Had not the proffer of Sicilia's sceptre
Detained him far from this devoted land,
In his humanity we should have found
The strongest earthly advocate against
The hasty rigor of th' offended King.
But the invisible angelic host
Are surely your protectors; could I else
Behold this fair one, whom I left a captive
In hopeless bondage, freely here fulfilling
This arduous duty of undaunted love?

GWENDYLEN.

A simple incident I have to tell
Will clear that mystery: it was my chance,
(So Heaven ordained to bless an anxious daughter)
To see the humble guard, who watched my prison,
Nursing his sickly infant: by the pity
I shewed his child, I led the honest soldier
To sympathize in all my filial sufferings,
Till, at the peril of his life, he gave me
The power to pay my nightly visit here:
But on my plighted word, that by the dawn
I will return his voluntary prisoner.

CLYFFORD.

Blest be his generous pity! if I live,
Such brave compassion shall be well rewarded.

LLANDORVIN.

Excellent youth! thou almost mak'st my heart
Enamoured of adversity: for that,
That only gives, what I this moment feel,
Exquisite joy in such consummate friendship,
As wanting not progressive aid from time,

Springs, like creation, perfect from the breath
Of pure beneficence.——

CLYFFORD.

To prove thy friend,
And change the colour of thy destiny,
Shall be the darling study of my soul.

LLANDORVIN.

I know it will: but O beware, dear youth,
Lest on thyself thou draw the perilous wrath
Of thy inexorable sovereign! fate
Could curse me with no misery more bitter,
Than to behold thy blooming life become
The victim of thy zeal to snatch from death
An old man weary of embittered age.

GWENDYLEN.

My honored father! Nature has exempted
Thy generous bosom from all selfish terror;
But thy kind heart is quick, as woman's fancy,
To catch an anxious fond inquietude
For every object of thy just affection.
Be not alarmed for this our noble friend!
Should he incense the King, by now promoting
Thy absolute escape, he will not suffer:
A lovely pow'rful angel of protection,
The gentle Eleanor! will be his guard,
And save the princely youth, whom she has fostered,
From her offended lord.

CLYFFORD.

O! she has virtues,
More than the warm impassioned eloquence
Of gratitude could speak: and she, I doubt not,
She will, in time, win, from the softened Edward,

All the atonement to your injured age,
That power can make for past indignities:
But, in this season of his recent anger,
You must not trust his mercy.

GWENDYLEN.

Haste, my father!
O haste to profit of the friendly night!
And speed in darkness to some distant refuge,
Less desolate than this!

CLYFFORD.

Dear Gwendylen!
Forgive me, that I thwart your eager prayer!
But at this time of peril, when our soldiers,
Lured by that watchful demon, avarice,
Are prowling for their prey, I wish your father
To rest, some days, in this dark sanctuary,
That death appears to consecrate, forbidding
The superstitious vulgar to approach.
Myself, as constant as the night returns,
Will visit him with sustenance and comfort.

LLANDORVIN.

Brave youth! I like thy counsel: this calm mansion
Tempers my troubled spirit: here my mind
Catches an hallowed energy, superior
To what the glittering scenes of life can give
To proud prosperity. Friend of distress!
My confidence in thee is my support;
For I confide to thee a charge, dear Clyfford!
More precious to my heart, than life or freedom,
The honor of my child! whate'er my fate,
Be thou her guardian! yes! I know thou wilt;
For in thy features I distinctly read

Truth incorruptible, and virtuous friendship.
But come, my children, honor bids us part:
The night's half wasted: come! Ill lead you forth
By paths more intricate: I have discovered
A winding cavity, that leads to light:
Take each of you my arm!—This way affords
A better chance of passing unobserved.

GWENDYLEN.

Dear father, ever vigilant for others!
Be careful of thy safety! and remember,
The life of Gwendylen depends on thine!

(Exeunt.

SCENE VII.

A ruined Abbey with the front of the sepulchral vault.

A PARTY OF SOLDIERS.

FIRST SOLDIER.

Would we could light upon this lurking rebel!
Courage, my friends! he'll prove a golden prize,
And pay the toil of our pursuit. You, Neville,
You, and your comrade pass yon mould'ring wall,
Search thro' each ruined cell of this old abbey,
While we remain in front, prepared to seize
The traitor, started from his secret haunt.

(Exeunt two Soldiers,

SECOND SOLDIER.

Heard you no noise?

FIRST SOLDIER.

No, nothing but their steps.

SECOND SOLDIER.

Hark! they have just descried some nightly rover.

SOLDIER, *(behind the scene.)*

Come forth! base runnagate! nay, if thou dost not,
We shall pursue, and drag thee from thy den.

FIRST SOLDIER.

My life on't he is found: stand firm, brave comrades,
If he is armed, fear not to strike him down!
Dead, or alive, our prize will be the same.

(The door of the Sepulchre opens, and Llandorvin rushes forth with a Sword.)

FIRST SOLDIER.

Yield, rebel, or thou diest.

LLANDORVIN.

No! ye poor slaves!
Enfeebled as I am, with age and wo,
Yet my good sword can make for me a passage
Thro' twice your opposition; I have seen
Your tyrant, in my day, glad to retreat
From the keen lightning of this radiant blade.
I pray ye, force me not to stain its lustre
With your ignoble blood!

FIRST SOLDIER.

Proud Cambrian, die!

LLANDORVIN.

Nay! then thou draw'st perdition on thyself:

(Llandorvin strikes, but after his first blow, the two Soldiers who pursued him, issue from the Sepulchre and seize him.)

Fate is against me! but exult in silence,
Ye prosperous servants of oppressive power!
And, while ye haste to claim the gold, ye covet,
Still reverence your captive! still my soul
Gives me to exercise the nobler courage,
To triumph over wrongs by brave endurance.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—A PRISON.

GWENDYLEN, *and a* SOLDIER.

SOLDIER.

Fair prisoner, thou art free.

GWENDYLEN.

Transporting sounds!
Our princely advocate has then prevailed;
And Gwendylen, restored to all the sweets
Of dear domestic duty, shall in peace
Cherish the parent, whom her love preserved.
My honest friend! for these thy blissful tidings
And all thy pity past, may every saint,
Who smiles upon the merciful, protect
Thee, and thy children! Why dost thou receive

My benediction with an air of sadness?

SOLDIER.

To think thy virtuous joy must turn to anguish,
When thou art told, as soon, alas! thou must be,
Thou only art released, because thy father
Is fallen again into captivity.

GWENDYLEN.

O! do not say so! rather let me hear
Eternal bondage is ordained my portion,
So he may 'scape with freedom! art thou sure?
My foolish heart, that vainly would attempt
To disbelieve thy tidings, now receives
The fatal full conviction.

SCENE II.

GWENDYLEN, LLANDORVIN, *brought in by* GUARDS.

GWENDYLEN.

My dear father!
To meet thee, never was a grief till now:
What cruel chance, or what base treachery——

LLANDORVIN.

'Tis rigid destiny, my child, that thwarts
Thy pious aim. Thus far I have indulged
Thy fond entreaty, by an abject care
To lengthen worthless life: now, since the Heavens

Frown on thy filial wish, I charge thee try
To reconcile thy mind to my dark fate!
It must be now my only thought to die,
As the dear brothers of my art have died,
Smiling contempt on proud iniquity.

GWENDYLEN.

We are not yet so lost, nor shall thy daughter
E'er quit a virtuous purpose of her heart,
For that the sudden bolt of accident
Shakes her imperfect work. No! to the last
My soul shall labour with increasing ardour,
To prove its fondness, and preserve my father.

LLANDORVIN.

Dear child! no more delude thyself with hopes,
That are but raised to fall; and in their ruin
O'erwhelm thy tender heart with tenfold anguish.

GWENDYLEN.

Heaven yet inspires, and gives me blest occasion
To act in thy dear service: our oppressor,
Mixing some mildness with barbarity,
Now terminates my bondage: and my freedom,
That I should hate, if not employed for thee,
May work thy preservation. I will now
With Clyfford supplicate the Queen to make
Thy life, once rescued by thy daughter's love,
Th' immediate care of her angelic mind.

LLANDORVIN.

'T were better my sweet child, renouncing hope,
To strengthen thy fond spirit, by embracing
The tranquil resolution of despair.

GWENDYLEN.

No, best of fathers! our disastrous lot
Has changed the cast, and colour of our duties.
Mild suff'rance now, that woman's part is thine,
And to thy daughter, Heaven itself enjoins
Every exertion anxious love can prompt.
Should I still fail, thou yet shalt see, my father,
Thy undegenerate child possesses courage
To suffer, and to share thy darkest fate.

(*Exit.*

SCENE III.

LLANDORVIN, *and the* SOLDIER.

LLANDORVIN.

Great giver, and supporter of our being!
Howe'er thy deep, inscrutable decree
Dispose of my poor residue of life,
Be bounteous to my child! when she has lost me,
As soon she must, by violence, or nature,
Let not her youth in desolation want
Objects of care, that may endear existence!
Still may she find in life friendship and love,
Sweet as her charms, and perfect as her virtue.

SOLDIER.

Forgive me, brave old man! but 'tis my order
To bear thee hence to more secure confinement,
Within the castle, where the King resides.

LLANDORVIN.

Good friend! 'tis I should pardon ask of thee,
That I am slow to thank thee, as I ought,
For a most signal act of generous pity
And kindness to my child: Give me thy hand!
Humanity, that shines in rigor's office,
Has double grace, and wins redoubled love.
Come! teach me how to shew thee I am grateful!
If fate allows me nothing more to give,
My dying benediction rest upon thee!

(Exeunt,

SCENE IV.—THE CASTLE.

QUEEN, CLYFFORD.

CLYFFORD.

My royal patroness, in whose indulgence
My youth has found, what destiny denied me,
A mother, and a sister's soothing kindness!
By all the purer glory thou hast won
In deeds of love, and mercy to thy people,
Who bless thy gentle sway, and worship thee
As sent to them by Heaven; ordained to temper
Thy lord's austerity! assist a daughter,
Who merits not to lose the bliss of saving
An honored sire from ignominious death.

QUEEN.

Clyfford! thou knowst, how gladly I would soften

The anger of the King: but here I doubt
My influence can profit thee but little;
For never have I seen his indignation
So vehement against this land. I pray thee,
Be cautious not to wake his dread displeasure,
By seeming partial to his enemies!
Perhaps thy young, and artless mind is blinded
By perilous passion, to thyself unknown;
A daughter's charms may varnish to thy sight
Th' offences of her sire, do not mistake
Ill-omened love for honorable pity.

CLYFFORD.

Kindest of beings! my ingenuous spirit
Has not a trouble, it would hide from thee.
The charms of Gwendylen, I own, have sunk
So deeply in my bosom, death alone,
Or frenzy could efface them from my heart.
But shame on him, who could allow his mind
To rove at love's suggestion, while the cries
Of suffering humanity demand
His better thoughts! altho' the damsel's beauty
Enchants me, and is dearer to my sight
Than wealth to avarice, or fame to valor,
I would pass life in exile from her charms,
If that alone could end her filial fears,
And ratify the safety of her father.

QUEEN.

Fond youth! I know, and love the generous ardor
Of all thy strong attachments: yet I tremble
Sometimes in thinking to what keen excess
Thy sensibility is apt to feel.
Thy nature, Clyfford! has in it the seeds
Of loftiest virtue, or most daring guilt.

Heaven keep thy spirit in blest ignorance
Of warring passions, and discordant duties!
If I can serve the object of thy pity,
By intercession with the King, I will:
And if, from dire necessities of state,
This death-devoted sire must die, I yet
Will take this hapless orphan to my care.

CLYFFORD.

Blest be the voice, that to my lightened heart
Utters so dear a promise! but conducted
By innocence and gratitude, she comes
To pay her instant homage to your goodness.

SCENE V.

QUEEN, CLYFFORD, GWENDYLEN.

CLYFFORD.

Rejoice, sweet paragon of anxious duty!
That Heaven has raised thee an angelic friend,
Worthy to be its delegate, in shielding
Virtue like thine from undeserved distress!
Our bounteous Queen anticipates thy prayer,
And with the fond alacrity of pity,
Alarmed for innocence, will lend her aid
To save thy honored father.

GWENDYLEN.

My full heart

Would thank thee, gracious lady! as it ought;
But finds that gratitude, in souls made tender
By wrongs, is far more powerful than fear,
And drowns that voice, which terror could not stifle.

QUEEN.

Fair stranger! there's attraction in thy youth,
Thy artless charms, and filial piety,
That binds thee to my bosom: and I feel
An anxious impulse, with maternal care,
To guard thy opening life from all that's evil.
Allow me then a parent's privilege
To be thy monitor!

GWENDYLEN.

Thou gentle sovereign!
Our foes, no doubt, who long have injured us
Beyond endurance, tell thee we are savage;
It is not so: the children of wild nature
Have hearts like a rich soil, where kind affections
Rise to the noblest height, and lavishly
Reward the liberal care, that bids them flourish.

QUEEN.

Unguarded warmth, pure virtue's quick companion,
Is oft her secret foe: I would inform you
How you incensed, and how you best may soften
The offended King. But he approaches: go!
Leave me my friends, that I without restraint
May plead your cause, and win him to forgiveness!

(Exeunt Clyfford and Gwendylen.

SCENE VI.

KING EDWARD, QUEEN, OFFICERS, *&c.*

KING EDWARD,

(speaking to an Officer as he enters.)

Tell our unwary guards, that if their prisoner
Now ordered to this castle's safer keep,
Escape a second time, 'twill be their doom
To perish in his place.

(Exit Officer.

O Eleanor!
My weary soul, sick of its fruitless toil,
To tranquillise this stubborn, stormy nation,
Turns with delight to thee, in whom well pleased
I ever find the tenderness of duty,
And ready, sweet, intelligent obedience.

QUEEN.

Reflect, my generous lord, in praising me,
To whom thy praise is transport; O! reflect,
Why I possess the qualities, that please thee!
'Tis thy kind favor makes me, what I am:
Submissive gratitude's the smiling child
Of bountiful protection. Gracious Edward!
Be but as mild a guardian to this land,
As thou hast been to me, and its glad people
Will bless, as I do, thy indulgent sway.

KING EDWARD.

No! my good Eleanor, thou little knowst
What iron rule this savage realm requires.

QUEEN.

Your pardon! I have recently been speaking
To a young Cambrian. Dear, considerate Edward!
So kindly sensible of weakest merit
In thy obedient wife! wilt thou not feel
The higher claims of an heroic daughter!
And grant to Gwendylen her father's life?
I know thou wilt: I ask it on my knees.

KING EDWARD.

Arise, thou dearest of petitioners!
I mean to have a speedy conference
With this retaken fugitive, and if
His conduct merits mercy, he shall find it——

(To one of the Guard.)

Haste to the captive minstrel, and conduct him
Strait to our presence!—Haste!

(Exit one of the Guard.

QUEEN.

Believe me, Edward!
I have a woman's heart, fondly ambitious,
And proud to triumph in a husband's glory!
But sated with thy military fame,
I long to see the enterprising warrior
Nobly eclipsed by the pacific king.
Effulgent valour well becomes thy crown;

But gems of milder radiance, peace and mercy,
Will give thy diadem its dearest charm.

KING EDWARD.

Pure minds, untutored by calamity,
Can rightly judge of peace; not so the savage:
They with harsh lessons from instructive rigor
Must toil, thro' pain and blood, to know her value.
There is a hot intemperance of spirit
In these wild mountaineers, that almost foils
The soundest discipline.——Authority,
And benefits, alike have failed to bend
The stubbornness of these tumultuous tribes,
Rude as their mountains, where rebellion sits,
Like a maimed vulture, waiting only time
To heal her wings, that ache with eagerness
To spurn confinement, and renew her ravage.

QUEEN.

No! happy Victor, thy resistless arms
Have made this country thine: and soon, I hope
To hear thee in the best of triumphs own,
The bliss to humanise, surpasses far
The joy of conquering: but thy captive comes:
I will not with solicitude too curious
Intrude upon your converse: yet remember,
Thy Eleanor commends him to thy mercy!

(Exit.

SCENE VII.

KING EDWARD, LLANDORVIN, GUARDS.

KING EDWARD.

Stranger! the fondness of thy daughter saved
Thy forfeit life; and still inspires our Queen,
Whose mildness is affliction's sanctuary,
With wishes for thy freedom: this we grant thee,
If thy discretion merits her regard.

LLANDORVIN.

That the rare virtues of my child endear her
To minds so qualified to judge of virtue
As far-famed Eleanor, still to my heart,
Chilled as it is with age, and patriot anguish,
Gives the quick ardour of parental pride:
For had I not, in all their fond excess,
The feelings of a father, trust me, Edward!
I could not now endure the life, thou offer'st:
To languish, as I must, in dark existence:
My spirit troubled with distressful visions
Of noblest friends, calamitously lost!
Or worse, the slavery of my native land!

KING EDWARD.

Thou shalt forget this land, in wisely passing
To happier scenes, my bounty shall provide thee
An English settlement.

LLANDORVIN.

I know thou'rt mighty:
The fav'rite of prosperity, and power!
But trust me, Edward! 'tis beyond thy empire
To mould anew the habits of the heart;
And thro' the breast of injured age diffuse
The native energy of young attachment.
If 'tis thy purpose to befriend two beings,
Who in domestic tenderness alone
May find a balm, to soothe their public sorrow,
Leave us in peace upon the rocks, that reared us!

KING EDWARD.

But wilt thou rest in peace? should I assign thee
A portion of this land, thy darling seat!
Wouldst thou engage, never to sound again
Notes of sedition, on thy daring harp?
But in a wiser strain, instruct the people
To look up to our salutary sway
With tranquil reverence?

LLANDORVIN.

No! not for half
Thy richer kingdom, added to this realm,
Would I debase a voice, that long has uttered
The purest dictates of impassioned freedom.
Imagination, under virtue's guidance,
I deem the rarest, richest gift of heaven,
And shall I stain the little I possess
By teaching injured slaves to bless their bondage,
And worship their oppressor?

KING EDWARD.

Dost thou brave me,
Audacious Rhapsodist?—now, in beholding

Rebellious fire illuminate thy visage,
My memory claims acquaintance with thy features.
Where have I seen thee?

LLANDORVIN.

Spare, insulting tyrant!
Spare to thyself a bitter recollection!
Yes! thou hast seen me, in my happier life,
Ere age and sorrow made it weak, and worthless;
When by Llewellyn's side, our patriot prince!
I fought for liberty: when thou, then young,
And tho' thy father's delegate, a novice
In the curst art to weaken and oppress,
Wert glad to make percipitate retreat
Before us, and the lightning of our swords
Flashed on the flying——

KING EDWARD.

Insolent enthusiast!

LLANDORVIN.

I knew the scene, thou bad'st me recollect,
Would gall thee, Edward! 'twas the early source
Of all thy ruthless rancor to my country.
Thou never couldst forgive the brave Llewellyn
For that bright triumph: hence thy enmity,
Disgracing manhood, kept his lovely bride
For years thy captive; lured by abject arts
A brother to desert him; and at last,
By the mean vantage of unequal power,
Spoiled him of life.

KING EDWARD.

He was a faithless vassal;
And justly suffered for repeated failures

Of his allegiance.

LLANDORVIN.

O belie him not!
Tho' thou hast stript him of his crown and life!
Fate cannot blast his fame: he was a prince
Munificent as nature, just as Heaven!
Fall'n as he is, his unsuspected praise
Shall live for ever in our grateful songs.

KING EDWARD.

It shall not live in thine, presumptuous minstrel!
Away with him to death!

LLANDORVIN.

Thou fierce destroyer!
Death is the only gift from thee, that I
Would willingly embrace; and for that gift,
Take thou this lesson from my parting spirit!
Thou saw'st, in Palestine, a curious Arab
Imprison water, in an orb of gold,
Till, by compression urged, the forceful fluid
Amazed thine eye in starting thro' the metal.
So genius, prest by tyranny, exerts
An energy, beyond the common laws
Of quiet nature. Here thou wouldst extinguish
Freedom and poetry: they mock thy wishes;
For they are woven in our frame of being;
And cannot perish but with human life.
My frail existence is thy easy victim;
But dying I shall triumph—e'en in thy kingdom,
Where thou art worshipped now by fear and int'rest,
A day shall rise, when the enlightened people
Shall hail the art, which thou wouldst crush for ever,
As the bright guardian of immortal virtue:

When kindred genius, in a lyric strain
Of rapturous excellence, shall teach the world
To mourn my fall, and execrate thy crimes.

KING EDWARD.

Away! vain prophet, to thy speedy death!
No! it shall be suspended: but till time
Allows us to bestow on thy presumption
Pre-eminence of punishment. Thy fate
Shall be no common spectacle; but, high
On Snowdon's rocks, in death thou shalt exhibit
An awful lesson to rebellious pride.

LLANDORVIN.

I am prepared to die:——o'er ruling Heaven
Is righteous still; since it assigns us now
The different lot, our different souls deserve;
For know, proud monarch! by your own award
You haste to infamy, and I to glory.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A PRIVATE APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE.

GWENDYLEN, CLYFFORD.

GWENDYLEN.

Remorseless homicide! is this his mercy?
Insulting whom he murders! strike him, Heaven!
Strike and remove from earth this curse of nature,
This base deformer of her dearest scenes,
Who calls his outrage justice!

CLYFFORD.

Gwendylen!
Hear me, dear Gwendylen!

GWENDYLEN.

I had a brother!

That he were living now! or that I could
Unsex me, and become the man he was!

CLYFFORD.

Thou hast a brother still! O thou hast more,
Dear Gwendylen in me; for all my soul,
Its hopes, its fears, its faculties are thine.

GWENDYLEN.

No! no! thy arm is fettered by thy station:
Else, generous youth! I could indeed believe
That thou hast pity to feel all our wrongs,
And courage to avenge them.

CLYFFORD.

Lovely victim!
My sense of what thou sufferest is so keen,
Thy honored father seems to me my own.
Inflamed by Edward's cruelty towards him,
My alienated heart at times forgets
The love and duty, that I owe my king.

GWENDYLEN.

Thou matchless friend of misery! how my heart
Reveres thee for thy sympathy!

CLYFFORD.

Believe me,
Never did man more feel another's wrongs,
(To noble minds more piercing than their own)
Than my indignant spirit feels thy father's.
If nought remained to save his injured virtue,
Perchance my hand—but hence! detested image!
Still, lovely Gwendylen, with better thoughts
I can revive thy hope.

GWENDYLEN.

Kind comforter!
Inform me, now the charm of thy compassion
Has given my troubled soul a transient calm,
To hear thee as I ought.

CLYFFORD.

The sudden order,
To fix conspicuous on the mountain's brow
Thy father's barbarous doom, is known abroad;
And as blind cruelty exasperates
Those, it intends to awe, a gallant band
Of new insurgents, at this very moment,
Form a brave ambuscade, in hopes to rescue
The victim, idolised by dauntless friendship.

GWENDYLEN.

Our Cambrian valour is not yet extinguished:
Ye powers of liberty, and justice prosper
These generous men! O spirit of my brother,
Thou wilt forsake thy Heaven for this dear purpose,
And hover with a shield angelical
O'er the heroic band, who aim to rescue
Our virtuous parent from imperial murder.
These are blest tidings: yet I wish to learn,
My kind consoler, how they flew to thee.

CLYFFORD.

A countryman of thine, to whom my power
Had rendered service, and who knows how keenly
My soul is anxious for thy father's safety,
Gave me quick notice, with an added prayer
That I—but see, the Queen!—Thou best of daughters
Console thy father in his gloomy prison.

While I, with ceaseless importunity,
Solicit her pure mind again to aid me.

SCENE II.

CLYFFORD, QUEEN.

QUEEN.

What loitering here! O shame to soldiership!
Never till now was ardent Clyfford seen
Reckless of arms, when his heroic king
Had issued for the field.

CLYFFORD.

Can it be so?
Has new commotion called his vigilant spirit
Forth on the sudden?

QUEEN.

Yes! with eyes that flashed
Indignant fire, prepared for fierce assault,
With that dread weapon, which his powerful arm
Alone can wield, he sallied to chastise
Such opposition, as I trust will fly,
E'en at the distant gleam of his high crest.
His anger kindled at the fresh report,
That a wild troop is lurking in the mountain
To intercept Llandorvin.

CLYFFORD.

Hapless father!

Then Heaven forsakes thee.

QUEEN.

What! is thy young heart,
Once the warm seat of gratitude and duty,
Now touched with pity only for the foes
Of thy kind sovereign? at the very time,
When he, who fondly trained thy youth to arms,
Ought to behold thee anxious at his side,
To ward off peril from his sacred person?

CLYFFORD.

Noblest, and justly most adored of women!
Adored by me in every character,
That can excite the fondest veneration!
A charge of base ingratitude from thee
Strikes me, as would a seraph's keen rebuke.
Freely to thee, as to the power who made it,
I shew my tortured heart, and all its feelings.
That I have loved the king, as much as child
E'er loved a parent, my past life has proved;
But while he thus oppresses virtuous age,
With unrelenting, useless——

QUEEN.

Clyfford! Clyfford!
Beware of this blind passion, which deludes thee!
It is not ours to judge the king's decree.

CLYFFORD.

Fair excellence! forgive me, if I say
The blindness is your own: but it becomes you.
In your soft sex 'tis virtue, 'tis perfection
Not to behold the failings of a lord,
In wedded love so peerless as your Edward.

I am of rougher mold: unyielding man:
Man, the proud owner of imperial reason!
Were I the king's true son, as I have been
The child of his protection; I should then,
Feel that his cruelty, on my just heart
Implanted hate, eradicating nature.
Yet hating his barbarity,—believe me,
I love his virtues with such gratitude,
Nothing in life could so delight my soul
As to die nobly on some bright occasion,
Where my brave service might promote his glory,
And to each royal heart endear my name.

QUEEN.

Clyfford, thou feelst too keenly; but thy truth,
And thy frank nature have endeared thee to us;
Haste, I entreat thee, with unclouded duty
Arm, and attend thy sovereign! As I trust
He will return triumphant without conflict;
In that best season for my mild entreaties,
I yet may gently lead his generous nature
Freely to grant, what force could not extort.
Yet may I save our venerable prisoner,
Whom in thy absence I will kindly visit.

CLYFFORD.

Angel of life! thou giv'st me new existence
In that blest promise. Monarchs of the world!
Learn from this model of imperial goodness,
That pure beneficence alone possesses
Perfect dominion! Learn of Eleanor
To rule enlightened minds, nor fear to lose
An empire founded upon fond esteem!

Exeunt.

SCENE III.—A DUNGEON.

The sound of a Harp is heard from a concealed recess in the prison.

GWENDYLEN, *(entering.)*

What sounds of melancholy charm arrest me?
It is my father: let me not intrude
On this most hallowed harmony! for thus
Enraptured he prepares his soul for Heaven,
By this most solemn spirit-soothing air,
Which, in his dying hour, an ancient bard
Gave to his wondering audience, death-inspired!
Again it sounds.—Here let me fondly pause
In reverential silence, till his hand
Relinquish the loved harp, that may so soon
Lose, and confirm his loss in mute dejection!

(Here a celebrated Air is played on the Harp behind the Scenes, from Jones's relicks of the Welch Bards.—page 59.)

SCENE IV.

GWENDYLEN, LLANDORVIN.

LLANDORVIN.

What! my sweet child! art thou within my prison,

And couldst thou suffer me to rest unconscious
Of thy dear presence?

GWENDYLEN.

Pardon me! I felt
My step suspended, and my soul absorbed
In those pathetic tones, that spoke of death.
Yet, my dear father, I am now elated
With the blest hope of your approaching freedom:
Freedom, not clouded with a base alloy,
As the precarious gift of lawless power,
But the bright present of endearing courage,
To fate superior in the cause of friendship!

LLANDORVIN.

What visionary hope has fond affection
Raised in thy sanguine fancy?

GWENDYLEN.

'Tis no vision:
But a momentous mystery; and now
Just whispered to me; yet by such a voice,
As gives a sanction to credulity.
O justly honored by thy grateful country!
There are brave Cambrians busy now, my father,
In nobly planning for that signal spot,
Which cruelty has fixt to close thy life,
A glorious scene of rescue, and of triumph.

LLANDORVIN.

Generous, but fruitless, and intemperate valour!
Haste! I conjure thee, my dear child, prevent
Their fatal purpose! fatal it must be,
If but suspected: haste! give them to know
It is my fervent wish, they would preserve

Their valued lives for hours of happier prospect;
And not embitter death to me, by making
My settled fate a prelude to their own!

GWENDYLEN.

Yes! I will haste, where haply I may learn
Yet more of this bold project: not prevent it;
Then only be thou disobeyed, my father,
When thou enjoinest, what our hearts abjure,
A fearful shrinking from thy dearest service!
Know, should our firm compatriots fail, thy wrongs
Would yet inspire a generous English hand
To pierce the tyrant's heart, ere his false breath
Could terminate thy being! O I pray thee,
Banish thy cruel thoughts of calm despair,
And in the friendship of the brave confide.

(Exit.

SCENE V.

LLANDORVIN, *(alone.)*

This sudden spring-tide of returning hope
Amazes me: and more her dark suggestion:
"A generous English hand," she points to Clyfford:
The horrible surmise, with dread conviction,
Wakes my worst fears: such horrors must not be.
But how may I, in bondage, yet restrain
The fervent spirit of precipitate youth,
Hurried to guilt by virtuous indignation?
Could I converse a moment with the Queen!
She is intelligent, and has a soul

That may be trusted for so pure a purpose
With dire imaginings.—What ho! attend me
Kind guardian of my prison!

SCENE VI.

LLANDORVIN, *and the* SOLDIER.

LLANDORVIN.

Canst thou, friend,
Convey a prayer to thy angelic Queen?
Haste and inform her, that an aged captive,
Not basely anxious for his worthless life,
But wishing to impart to her alone
Things of high moment to her heart, implores
A minute's audience.

SOLDIER.

Her attentive goodness
Anticipates your wish—behold the Queen!

SCENE VII.

LLANDORVIN, QUEEN.

QUEEN.

Brave, aged stranger! thy engaging daughter

Has taught my heart to take deep interest
In what concerns thee; and I come, with hopes
To lead thy manly mind to such mild conduct,
As may appease the king.

LLANDORVIN.

O sovereign lady!
To whose acknowledged virtue my proud spirit
Pays willing homage, 'twas my ardent wish
To hold with thee important conference;
Not from a mean solicitude to save
The slighted remnant of my days; a care
Of keener influence absorbs my thoughts,
And tortures me with unexampled terror,
That I could utter to no ear but thine.

QUEEN.

Speak all thy fears, for I am much thy friend!

LLANDORVIN.

Did I not think thee, gracious Queen, endowed
With all the rarest qualities, that render
Friendship of high, and sacred estimation,
I could not to thy gentle bosom trust
What I would say: it will require from thee
Steady exertion of what purest friendship
Inspires, indulgence, courage, secrecy.

QUEEN.

Thy words amaze me, and this preparation
Fills me with all the dread of blind conjecture.

LLANDORVIN.

I trespass on thy gentleness; perchance
My apprehension is a vague surmise:
A gloomy vision of distempered age!

Should it have more foundation, still thou mayst
By the mild influence of guardian virtue
Annihilate the apprehended evil.

QUEEN.

Trust me, thy daughter——

LLANDORVIN.

No! my present fear
Points to an object that demands from thee
Much higher care.

QUEEN.

O Heaven! thou art apprised
Of some dark peril menacing the King;
Yet if—I am bewildered; for alas!
His life endangered might to thee suggest
Matter of hope, and joy, but not of terror.

LLANDORVIN.

I scorn hypocrisy; and thou fair Queen,
Thou knowst, I must deem the death of Edward
A blessing to my country, yet believe me
I from his cruelty would undergo
An age of torture, rather than permit
A virtuous youth, long fostered by his bounty,
In a dark moment of distracted love,
With murderous frenzy——

QUEEN.

Ah! my boding heart!
Thou speak'st of Clyfford: tell me, I conjure thee,
How far the passions of this fiery youth
Have lead him to forget——

LLANDORVIN.

Be comforted!

His quick, and ardent mind, though strongly troubled,
Is not as yet estranged from filial duty,
That binds him to you both: thou gentle sovereign,
Watch I conjure thee all his starts of passion!
And with thy speedy salutary counsel,
With the fond privacy, which mothers use,
To screen the errors of a darling son,
Fix his bright soul within the sphere of truth,
Lest wand'ring now, like an eccentric star,
Its bursting fury scatter hideous death!

QUEEN.

Noblest of foes! I read thy heart aright;
And gratefully revere thee for thy caution:
This generous effort——

LLANDORVIN.

O! it merits not
Your heart-affecting praise: I but obey
The native impulse of humanity.
When genuine nature guides the feeling soul,
'Tis the prime pleasure of experienced age
To watch o'er ardent youth, and fondly snatch it
From those attractive gulfs of splendid guilt,
Where a bright syren, under virtue's mask,
Lures the brave mind to unperceived dishonor.

QUEEN.

Farewell! kind stranger! thy exalted conduct
Endears thee to my soul: Heaven grant me powers,
Soon with glad steps revisiting thy dungeon,
To bring thee life, and liberty, and honor!

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A view of Snowdon with tents at a distance.

QUEEN, *and* MORTIMER. *meeting.*

QUEEN.

I joy to meet thee, Mortimer! Thy spirit
Will not, in weak compassion to a woman,
Lull me with false reports: Say! I conjure thee,
Is the King wounded?

MORTIMER.

No! on my life, not wounded!

QUEEN.

Why then, forgetting his accustomed care
To quiet my quick fears, why came he not

Back to my anxious arms, when victory
Restored him from this hot tumultuous conflict?
Where, as his hasty messenger avowed,
Danger, in many a new and hideous shape,
Made e'en the sternest soldiers stand aghast,
And deem their sovereign lost.

MORTIMER.

My royal mistress!
Who reignest o'er the hearts of youth and age,
Trust a rough veteran's word! my voice, unpractised
In uttering falsehood, should I wish to speak it,
Still to thy piercing spirit must betray
The evil it would hide.

QUEEN.

Dost thou assure me
Not one of all those vengeful mountaineers,
Whose rage was pointed at my Edward's life,
Had power to wound the too impetuous hero?

MORTIMER.

No! for he bears an amulet, whose power
Turns peril to security: that courage,
Which on the pressure of occasion, springs
To such exertion, as to common souls
Appeared impossible. Excess of toil
Has tempted him to rest on Snowdon's brow:
As he retired, exhausted to his tent,
He issued orders, that the captive bard
Should to the mountain's open front be led,
And by our archers suffer speedy death.

QUEEN.

Good Heaven! the mandate is not yet fulfilled?

MORTIMER.

Not yet! but guards are passing, to conduct
The hoary traitor to the lofty spot,
Chosen to give his doom conspicuous terror.

QUEEN.

O Mortimer! this order was the dictate
Of an o'er-heated mind: When cooled by slumber,
The generous temper of the King will surely
Incline to pardon; canst thou not suspend——

MORTIMER.

Forgive me, gentle sovereign, if I own
I have no power, nor will, I must avow,
To stop the rebel's death: and I must haste,
According to the King's most anxious bidding,
To watch impassioned Clyfford, lest that youth,
Entangled in the snares of Cambrian beauty,
Should madden at the sufferings of the fair one,
And in his frenzy strive to snatch once more,
Her guilty father, from the stroke of justice.

QUEEN.

I, on my knees, will creep to Edward's couch,
And in the name of that protecting Heaven,
Who has delivered him from signal hazard,
Wake, and inspire his spirit to exert
Its best prerogative, the power to save!

(Exeunt.

SCENE II.—A ROYAL TENT.

KING EDWARD,

(Sleeping on a Couch with his armour by the side of it.)

CLYFFORD, *(entering.)*

Why shakes my frame, in this tempestuous conflict
Of warring thoughts? The minute past I seemed
Led hither by an angel's hand, to rescue
Virtue from wrongs, and nature from oppression.
Now, clouds of horror blot my heavenly vision,
And I feel dragged by demons to this spot,
To execute the task of hell.—Avaunt!
Ye tempters of my soul! ye shall not force me
To stab the royal patron of my youth:
No! I will kneel, beside his quiet pillow,
Invoking Heaven to quicken, in his mind,
The only virtue, his high spirit wants,
Heart-winning clemency! sleep on, secure!
Majestic, glorious Edward! only wake
To mercy, and munificence!

KING EDWARD, *(in troubled sleep starting.)*

Away!
And lead him to his death!

CLYFFORD.

Inhuman sounds!

Implacable oppressor! Cruelty
Infects thy dreams: thy sanguinary soul
Glares thro' the trembling veil of ruffled sleep,
Betraying thy resolves!—Barbarity
So absolute must cancel every bond:
Humanity inspires me: injured nature
Bids me destroy the merciless destroyer.

SCENE III.

KING EDWARD, CLYFFORD, QUEEN.

(While Clyfford raises his dagger, the Queen enters and seizes his arm.)

QUEEN.

Hold! frantic Clyfford! hold! can mad affection
Urge thy young heart to worse than parricide?
Has not the bounteous King cherished thy youth,
With care surpassing e'en a father's fondness?

CLYFFORD.

He has, angelic Eleanor! and I
Prepared to stab him sleeping: but these tears,
That burst perforce from my o'er-burthened heart,
Tell thee, I feel how curst a wretch I am.

QUEEN.

Be comforted! for timely penitence
Makes solid virtue of ideal guilt.

CLYFFORD.

Guide of my life! and guardian of my soul!
Thou art too good: I have not merited,
Thus on thy pure and heavenly form to rest
A brain, that burns with complicated anguish.

KING EDWARD, *(starting up.)*

Give me my battle-axe! I will pursue
Those trait'rous fugitives: 'twas but a dream.
Ha! my sweet love! art thou within my tent?
Say! what mischance has given our youthful Clyfford
That pallid air of anguish, and dismay?

QUEEN.

O my too fearless Edward! who that live,
As we do in thy life, could be informed
Of thy undaunted eagerness to court
Extremes of danger, with thy dread escape
From toils so full of terror, and retain
The native quiet of untroubled features?

CLYFFORD.

No! thou benignant angel, think not thus
With tenderness unmerited, to hide
The wild atrocity of one, whose heart
Was never formed for guilt, or for disguise.
Ingratitude, hypocrisy are fiends,
That, frantic as I am, I still abjure.

KING EDWARD.

Thy looks, and language equally exceed

The reach of my conjecture.

CLYFFORD.

Royal Edward!
Relentless as thou art, thy soul is noble;
Thou never wilt surmise, thy fostered Clyfford
Could lift against thee an assassin's dagger;
But to a heart like mine the worst of tortures
Would be concealment of intended crimes.
Had not this lovely seraph been thy guard,
I had destroyed my King, my friend, my father!
My guilt is manifest: my misery
Beyond endurance: I conjure thee, now
Let both thy justice, and thy pity grant me
The death I have deserved!

KING EDWARD.

Unhappy youth!
Thy hasty passion for the Cambrian fair,
Whose stubborn father scorned our terms of pardon,
Has harrassed thee to madness.

QUEEN.

Let his sufferings,
His duty, his remorse, and my fond prayers
Now plead for each offender!

(A Dead March is heard.)

Gracious Heaven!
What mean these notes of death?

KING EDWARD.

Those sounds announce,
What even thy entreaty, best beloved!

Must not avert; the bard's approaching fate!
See! the guards lead him from the vale below.

CLYFFORD.

Inhuman ministers of death! suspend
Your fatal march, for ye mistake your victim.
Glory and life should be Llandorvin's portion;
Disgrace and death belong to me alone;
I fly to save him by the just exchange.

(Rushes madly out.

KING EDWARD.

Stay! thou rash youth!—His madness will not hear me.

QUEEN.

Lord of my heart!—If, by a life of duty,
I yet may plead against thy settled purpose——

KING EDWARD.

No! Eleanor, 'tis fixt: I must not cancel
The firm decree of policy and justice,
To soothe the amorous frenzy of a boy,
Tho' dear to me, as if he were my child.
But let me lead thee to yon neighbouring tent,
To save thee better from this mournful scene,
And seek an active guardian, who may watch
O'er the wild steps of this distracted stripling!

(Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

Another part of the Mountain with a distant prospect of a more elevated spot, on which may be discovered an attendant croud, and preparations for execution:

LLANDORVIN, GUARDS.

LLANDORVIN.

Unhappy agents of injurious power!
I pardon your base taunts: alas! ye know not
To what depravity you sink your nature,
When you insult a guiltless, wronged old man,
Who unreluctant hastes to join the spirits
Of dear companions lost, bards! warriors! princes!
Whose fortitude and genius could not save
This dear devoted land from desolation,
Or shield their bright existence from the stroke
Of tyrannous extinction.

GUARD.

You forget,
Loquacious traitor! we have yet to mount
The steepest of these craggs.

LLANDORVIN.

Rude monitor?

I am not now to learn, that your stern King,
I thank his unmeant kindness, has appointed
My death on yonder heights: I could not wish
A nobler scene, to shew how willingly
I seal, with blood, the bond of my attachment
To wounded freedom, and my ruined country.
Martyrs of liberty, like those of faith,
By public sufferings, with a soul unshaken,
Become the source of blessings infinite
To unborn ages, and my soaring spirit
Pierces thro' distant time to hail those blessings.
A father's feelings still, to this dread instant,
Recal my heart, and on this spot I pause,—
But to bestow, what tyranny itself
Must grant a parent, leave to give his child,
A dying benediction!

GUARD.

Then in vain
You halt; for see! where wiser friends are busy
To draw the damsel hence.

LLANDORVIN.

Tormenting slaves!
Wound me not there! O glorious Gwendylen!
Lo! her indignant spirit has eluded
Their vile constraint: like an impassive seraph,
That mortal limitation cannot stop,
She flies, Heaven-warranted! to give her father
All he demands on earth.

SCENE V.

GWENDYLEN,

rushes into the arms of her Father.

LLANDORVIN.

Child of my heart!
One only wish disturbed my parting soul;
And thou, most perfect in all filial virtues!
The loveliest daughter, that e'er blest a parent!
With tenderness unwearied, thou art come
To hear my latest counsel: thou wilt make it
The treasure of thy fond, thy faithful bosom,
And I shall die, exulting to have saved thee
From perils, worse than ignominous death.

GWENDYLEN.

Here, thou dear source and glory of my life!
Here would I grow: and be but as a leaf
Upon its parent tree, that severed thence,
Must quickly perish: for since Heaven denies me,
The bliss I hoped, to have preserved thy being,
My sole ambition is to share thy doom.

LLANDORVIN.

No! my brave child! I have a task to give thee
Much harder than to die.

GWENDYLEN.

O haste to name it!

And be the task more arduous, than ever
Mortal received, that I may shew the world
With what impassioned truth I love my father.

LLANDORVIN.

Exquisite girl! see! our good angels send
The only friend now left me upon earth,
To whom, as to thyself, my dying counsel
Deeply imports.

SCENE VI.

LLANDORVIN, GWENDYLEN, CLYFFORD, GUARDS.

CLYFFORD, *(entering wildly.)*

Thou honoured sire! whom genius, virtue, age
Have sanctified: I come, a guilty youth,
To die, as I have merited, for thee.

LLANDORVIN.

What means my generous friend?

CLYFFORD.

Full of thy wrongs,
And madd'ning at thy lovely daughter's anguish,
My soul forgot how much I owed my King;
And as a murderer——

LLANDORVIN.

Ah! my prophetic fears!

Thou hast not killed the patron of thy youth?

CLYFFORD.

No! his angelic Eleanor defeated
My frantic aim.

LLANDORVIN.

Then hear me, noble Clyfford,
And since her beauties, and my injured age
Inflame thy heart to such a fond excess,
Hear and obey a dying friend's injunction!
Dear youth! to thy most perilous age, and temper
Crimes, and enormities of deepest die,
From the false light of passion, catch the semblance
Of splendid enterprise. Thou lov'st my daughter,
And she is worthy of a prince's heart:
But never shall the wrongs, I suffer, tempt me
To make the illusive ardor of thy love
My instrument of vengeance, as I might,
Against my deadliest foe.

CLYFFORD.

Thou godlike sufferer!
Canst thou, thus dying by a stern oppressor,
Spare, and forgive the tyrant, who destroys thee?

LLANDORVIN.

There was a time, brave Clyfford! when my blood
Grew hot like thine, at thoughts of tyranny;
When my impassioned harp was ever ready
To vibrate, at the sound of Edward's name,
With notes of execration, and defiance:
The hallowed quiet of approaching death
Gives me serener force, and purer courage;
The oppressor I abhorred, I now can pity;

And with a mind unheated own the good,
Mixed with his dire defects: from this wronged country
He merits detestation; but from thee,
Trained as thou art by his domestic kindness,
He justly claims the obedience of a child:
Atone then for one start of guilty passion
By future duty! and, I charge thee, never
Wake his paternal wrath by a rash union
With this poor orphan, lovely as she is!

CLYFFORD.

I am a wretch not meriting such bliss:
And only would redeem my darkened spirit
From self-abhorrence by most freely giving
My life for yours.

LLANDORVIN.

No! dear ingenuous youth,
Live! and protect, I charge thee, from all outrage
This dear, and friendless darling of my heart!
I have but thee, to whom I can bequeath her,
But that your pure attachment may be free
From guilt and misery ('tis my dying counsel:)
Unless my death should soften your stern king,
Protect her only with fraternal love!
I pause too long: my children! one embrace!
And we must part: may all the wrongs, I suffer,
Be recompensed in blessings upon you!
That fond idea gilds the gloom of death,
Endearing all its pangs! farewell for ever!

(Exit with Guards.

SCENE VII.

GWENDYLEN, CLYFFORD.

GWENDYLEN.

I lose him, and the world's a stony desert,
That seems to petrify my heart within me.
O that kind Heaven would, in the very moment,
When his freed spirit flies from this base earth,
Release me from a life, that now affords me
No hope to form, no duty to fulfill.

CLYFFORD.

Dear victim of barbarity, my soul
Still in fond unison with thine, partakes
Thy filial wish, regarding life with scorn.

GWENDYLEN.

O generous Clyfford, grant me one request;
While yet my father breathes, O grant me still
To gaze upon him; and forbid, I pray thee,
Forbid officious care to force my weakness
From the attractive scene of death! I hear,
Surely I hear a pitying angel's voice,
That kindly tells my sympathetic heart
That, in beholding, I may share his fate.

CLYFFORD.

An heavenly impulse seems against my reason

To force me to obey thee.

GWENDYLEN.

Haste, my friend !

CLYFFORD.

I will conceal me in a peasant's garb ;
And thou shalt choose the spot, where we will stand,
In mutual awe and agony to catch
The latest accents of thy sacred sire !

(Exeunt.

SCENE VIII.—THE KING'S TENT.

KING EDWARD, QUEEN.

QUEEN.

Yet, my dear lord, by all your perils past,
By all your ardent hopes of future honor,
Yet, while the pressing minutes urge my voice
To most important prayer, while time allows
My fearless conqueror to make sweet mercy
The blest confirmer of his perfect glory,
Yet, yet recall from death this brave old man !
O save like Heaven, in the distressful moment,
When safety's vanished from the eyes of hope.

KING EDWARD.

Dearest of supplicants ! it pains me ever

To thwart the wishes of thy gentle spirit;
But it is royalty's severest duty,
To keep the sword of punishment unbiassed
By the quick outcries of too tender pity.

QUEEN.

No! my mistaken lord! it is not pity
For those, who suffer by thy fatal wrath,
Tho' I acknowledge my heart bleeds for them;
'Tis love for thee: 'tis passion for thy glory,
That gives thy Eleanor the strength to plead
Against this stern decree: O gracious Edward!
I wish thy noble nature prized and loved
By every subject, as it is by me:
I know, in seeming cruel to this land,
It is thy aim, by sage austerity,
To fill the savage mind with useful terror:
But has not gentleness the blessed power
To rule the willing heart, while o'erstrained rigor
Gains but the fearful semblance of dominion
O'er the forced acts of alienated souls?

KING EDWARD.

Sweet advocate of mercy! were all hearts
Pure as thy own, thy pleading should prevail,
But for the government of baser beings,
Obedience must be founded upon fear.

QUEEN.

Fear leads to hate: and hate to strife, and frenzy:
Think of young Clyfford! O! if he, who felt
Thy fostering care, and idolized thy virtues,
If he was driven to momentary madness
By one harsh mandate of the King he loved,
What may thy people, who ne'er view like him,

Thy private scene, that blissful sanctuary
Of true domestic tenderness! O Edward!
Pride of my soul! I plead for thy renown:
Dearer to me than empire! while thou canst,
Save I conjure thee, save this aged bard!
To let him perish would obscure thy glory
With the base sin of black ingratitude;
For he with pure disinterested spirit,
Professing enmity to thy dominion,
Yet wished to shield thy life from hideous peril.
He with a father's gentleness to me
Spoke all his just surmises, and suggested
Means to restore to reason and to duty
The fascinated mind of frantic Clyfford.

KING EDWARD.

I can no more withstand, dear Eleanor,
Thy tender eloquence: thy prayer is granted:
One of the guard shall bring the rescued victim
To bless thee for that life, for which thy sweetness
Pleads irresistibly.

QUEEN.

Let me, let me,
My gracious lord, the happiest of thy servants!
O let me fly the herald of thy grace!
Mercy will lend me her auspicious wings;
And joy inspire me with his piercing voice,
To spread from rock to rock my welcome tidings

SCENE IX.

KING EDWARD, QUEEN, GWENDYLEN.

GWENDYLEN,

(entering, and almost expiring.)

'Tis in vain,
Too lovely consort of a crowned assassin!
In vain thy active tenderness attempts
To cancel his barbarity: My father,
With firm triumphant fortitude, has past
To those blest realms, whence not the voice of Kings,
Nor the more sacred breath of spotless virtue,
Can now recal his earth-contemning spirit.

KING EDWARD.

Unhappy daughter! hast thou seen him perish!
Where then was Clyfford, whose impetuous pity
Flew hence unwarranted to save thy sire.

GWENDYLEN.

Relentless Edward! hear his fate, and feel
How cruelty, in its blind rage, recoils,
And like a madd'ning serpent, stings itself!
That generous youth, whom I shall soon rejoin,
Suffers no longer in a world, which thou,
Inhuman monster! by thy savage sway,
Hast made a residence, unfit for beings,
Who with a heart like his embrace the injured.

Hark! I am called: their free, ascending spirits
Wait yet for me: I come: The generous Clyfford
At my request conducted me to view
The horrid scene, that my prophetic soul
Felt by anticipation a release
From all thy tyranny——yes, I beheld
Thy murderous archers pierce my father's breast——
That shaft to me was like the friendly lightning,
That makes convulsive anguish sink to peace.
Lifeless I fell, and, as I since have learnt,
Kind Clyfford deemed me dead, and nobly flew
To bless my dying father, and to tell him
That death's kind angel had conveyed his daughter
To wait for him in Heaven!

QUEEN.

What fatal chance
Destroyed my Clyfford?

GWENDYLEN.

In a peasant's garb
He rushed upon the weapons of the soldiers
That sought to bar him from my sire's embrace——
They did not know their prince, till his life-blood
Stained their accursed steel——He spurned their aid
Embraced my sire then dying, and retired
To die near her, whom he had left as dead.
His honored voice recalled my parting soul
Only to bless him in his death, and bring
His benediction to his heart's pure queen
His guardian Eleanor——this duty done
To my loved Clyfford, to that glorious youth,
Who gave me proof how pleasing 'tis to die,
Kind nature now is rapidly dissolving
The mortal ties, that yet withhold my spirit

From him, and from my sire: now earth receive
This poor incumbrance, that my willing soul
Exults to quit——

(She falls.)

QUEEN.

O yet abjure not life,
Dear Gwendylen! thou shalt be as my child,
And join with me to grace thy Clyfford's grave.

GWENDYLEN.

No! thou mild angel, wedded to a fiend!
Rather would I, to recompense thy goodness,
Share with thee a blest death, that terminates
Unmerited affliction: but thy doom
Is to live long, and live a wounded witness
Of mad ambition, which thou canst not temper.
My parting soul, rapt in prophetic vision,
Sees all the future reign of thy fierce Edward;
Another realm, like injured Cambria, waits
To crouch beneath his desolating sway,
And curse the proud invader: His stern soul,
Unsoftened by thy tenderness, shall lose thee;
But thou, sweet Eleanor! Thou shalt be mourned,
With honors, such as never Queen before thee
Won from imperial sorrow.

KING EDWARD.

Pray! be silent,
Thou poor distracted girl, and let us try
If salutary care may still——

GWENDYLEN.

Stand off, rash tyrant! yet respect the dying!
And hear thy destiny! Thy joy is conquest,

And conquest shall be thine: iniquity
Draws, as its curse from fortune, all it wishes.
Power shall not sate thee, nor affliction soften:
E'en death itself, whose visible approach
Can bend ambition to new thoughts of peace,
Shall fail from thy infuriate soul to banish
Thy savage thirst of empire and of carnage.
Thy dying voice shall bid thy very bones
Be borne to battle in thy army's front,
Tho' dead still proving the accurst oppressor!
But mark the fruit of all thy victories!
Thy child, so basely made the lord of Cambria,
Shall die the vilest death: hurled from a throne
Stained by thy guilt, and his ignobler vices!
Ages shall rise, when thy enlightened country,
No longer dazzled by thy martial triumph,
Shall see thy crimes, as my just father saw them,
And English bards shall execrate thy name.
I faint: ye friendly spirits hovering round me,
Receive me to your fellowship!—My father!——

(Dies.

KING EDWARD.

O Eleanor! the ravings of this damsel
Have struck an icy tremor thro' my breast,
Ne'er felt before! See thou her corse be honored,
And laid with our lost Clyfford as his bride!
Had I, thou mild remembrancer of mercy!
Had I but listened to the first entreaty,
Of thy benignant heart, we had escaped
This hour of vain regret, and deep remorse.

FINIS.

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Hayley, William
Three plays ...of
the late Lieut.-General
Burgoyne

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